THE OLD HOUSE AT SANDWICH

A NOVEL

BY

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

"THIS HOUSE TO LET."

I AM making a summer holiday excursion about a corner of the pastoral county of Kent and come upon the quaint, old-fashioned port of Sandwich. I am impressed with the remarkable way in which it has retired from the sea, gone inland, as it were, like a migrated city; gone inland, nursing its strange history and traditions, its memories of Elizabeth and the Armada, its memories of battle, murder, and sudden death; nursing as it were, its commercial and social disappointments, and retiring altogether from a sea-faring life. I wander about the old place and note its curious waterways, that wind about the town, forming natural moats to streets and houses; and in one instance excavating for itself a passage beneath the dining-room of an ingenious resident who, by the contrivance of a trap-door, converts it into a convenient wine-cooler for summer dinner parties.

It is an autumn day. I have noticed the extraordinary luxuriance of the wheat that grows upon the adjacent battle-field, nurtured, it is said, by the bones of the ancient combatants. I have explored the local cavern close by, and seen the autumn leaves drifting hither and thither on the wind; and at last, coming back to the old town, have found myself contemplating a somewhat dilapidated but rather imposing old house, I might almost call it a mansion. The painted sign upon the exterior, "This House to Let," is almost as yellow and *faded* as the ancient blinds that partially cover the

windows as they blink in the setting sun. I am tempted to look over the railings into the old-fashioned garden, rank with weeds and flowers, but still suggestive of cultivated flower-beds and trailing roses.

I observe in a shaded corner of the garden a middle-aged man trimming a small grass-plot, the only cultivated spot in the grounds, a little oasis in the general desert. He looks up at me with a pleasant rubicund face, lays down his garden-tools, and nods. I bid him "Good day," and say I hope I am not intruding.

"Not at all," he says.

I tell him that the notice, "This House to Let," and the dilapidated look of the place, have attracted my attention. I am idling away the day in Sandwich, and it has occurred to me to wonder why "this very desirable mansion" should remain unoccupied.

He does not reply, but, crossing the garden, comes toward me, opens a wicket, and, with no more invitation than a smile and a bow, I enter. He tells me that he is not a gardener, except in an amateurish sort of way; that he is not the owner of the house, nor is he the agent in whose hands it has been left to let; but that, in spite of his old jacket and the occupation at which I have surprised him, he is the vicar of the adjacent parish, and at my service. It is not necessary that he should give me this evidence that he is a man of education and a gentleman, for neither his occupation, nor his old gray coat, can disguise his quality and position.

"The very house, I should say, for Queen Elizabeth to have lodged in when she visited Sandwich," I said, looking around me.

"And you would say rightly," replied the vicar, in a pleasant, mellow voice. "Would you like to see the place?"

Receiving a reply in the affirmative, the clergyman laid down his hoe, put on his coat, and produced a bundle of keys.

He was the very picture of an old-fashioned rural dean. Squarely built, of medium height, he had a large head, from which fell a thick crop of silky white hair. A rubicund face, short white beard, and genial brown eyes, he had a sensitive mouth; and he stood firmly in his square-toed shoes. He wore a white neckcloth, and his coat was of a clerical cut, though a trifle threadbare, and there were traces of snuff on the collar of his waistcoat. A couple of old seals on a black ribbon hung from his watch-fob, and his rusty black trousers were a trifle baggy at the knees.

A queer old house, with dusty windows that blinked at you

through half-opened shutters, and with creepers that tapped mysteriously and ghost-like at both.

"It was almost ancient three hundred years ago," said the vicar, "when good Queen Bess came here; but my memories of it are of recent date."

I climbed up into the glories of the timbered roof, the original woodwork of which had stood the honors of a siege in the olden days. A bat dashed by me, raising a cloud of dust, through which the sun worked a luminous beam that fell upon some fresh sprigs of ivy. These pioneer shoots of a hardy plant had consumed hundreds of years in forcing their way among the old timbers. It was a unique picture, this dusty corner of the old roof, with its long column of light playing fantastically upon the obtruding ivy.

"And this," I exclaimed, as we stood once more in the old-fashioned garden that had an outlook upon the sluggish river,—"this is the house in which Queen Elizabeth was entertained!"

"Yes," said the parson, "she became the patroness of this town some three hundred years ago. The port had already decayed, even at that early period, in consequence of the gradual silting up of the harbor. Under her letters patent in 1561 (you will find in the local and other histories), Flemish settlers, workers in serge, baize, flannel, and other materials, settled here. They were privileged to hold markets; and to encourage and give countenance to the town, Elizabeth came here in 1573. The Corporation turned out and gave her a fine reception. The town records are worth looking up. They contain some curious information upon the subject. Among other things, the Corporation gave orders that the brewers should brew good beer against her Majesty's coming. She came, it seems, one Monday evening in August, and lodged in this house until the Thursday following. The town was strewn with fresh gravel, rushes, and herbs, and decorated with flags and green boughs. The Queen, almost as soon as she rode into the town (she was on horseback), was presented with a Greek Testament and a gold cup worth £100. Henry VIII had previously visited Sandwich, and he stayed in this house; so, naturally, Queen Elizabeth came here. On the Tuesday she was entertained with a combat on the water between two men on stages in boats, each protected against the other's spear or staff by a wooden shield. The Queen professed herself greatly pleased at the sport. Wednesday brought a more important exhibition—an attack upon a fort which was erected for

the occasion. After a furious sham combat the fort gave in, and the assailants planted the Queen's flag upon the citadel, amid loud cheers from combatants and spectators. The next day it is recorded that the mayoress and the Jurats' wives gave the Queen a banquet of 109 dishes, on a table twenty-eight feet in length, in the local school-house. The dinner was cooked by the ladies of Sandwich, and her Majesty was so delighted with their culinary skill that, in addition to partaking of several of the dishes, she directed that others should be carried to her lodgings, and she tasted these possibly at supper-time in the dining-room you have just inspected. There was something very practical in the educational display made for the Queen's edification on the fourth day. Upon a platform in front of the old school-house 120 English and Dutch children were paraded with their spinning-wheels at work, an exhibition of industry that was highly commended by the Queen."

"And I don't know," I said, "that under the reign of Victoria, who in some respects is not unlike her illustrious predecessor Elizabeth, that our new school authorities can show a more useful example of practical education than the historical one you have so well described."

"You touch a broad question, and a deep," said the vicar, as he plucked some sprigs of sweetbriar, and sticking one piece in his coat, handed me another for mine, "and a question which has many sides. In these days we are apt to look back and plume ourselves on our wisdom; but the fine lady of to-day who can neither brew nor bake is to my mind a poor creature. If Mrs. Newbolde had thought as much of her pies as of her earrings, as much of the brightness of her kitchen pans as of the cost of her gown, as much of what her husband thought of his dinner as what the gossips of Sandwich thought of her beauty and her bonnets, my dear dead neighbor would probably never have got drunk, but would have lived to die in his bed, famous and respected, with his children around him, and with the consciousness that his son, George, would have succeeded to his good name, and his daughter have been a comfort to her mother, and the sunshine of the dear old home he would have bequeathed them."

"Ah!" I said, "you that are old in years and experience, can look back and count the stumbling-places; but we that are young have to go blindly on, ignorant of the pitfalls in our path, not even *dreaming that what seems* to us a copse of flowers at the end of it

is a yawning gulf, a poisonous morass, or the lurking-place of an assassin."

"It is pleasant to talk to a stranger," said the vicar, taking my arm and leading me to a break in the garden wall, over which we could see the river and the low-lying meadows beyond; "but I hope you and I may become friends; I have taken a fancy to you."

"Thank you very much," I replied.

"When I say it is pleasant to talk to a stranger," the vicar continued, "I mean that my neighbors are only with me and generally stick to old topics, and one understands their views and ideas as a rule so well that it is easy to know what they will think about even a new subject; while you have not only ideas, but they belong to youthful experience, and young people interest me. They are like that boat you see going out with the tide; it was only built the other day; it is small—a little coaster—but it is going to sea; it will put in at strange ports, and will encounter storm and tempest; it may return with torn sails and battered bows, and one day will be laid up hereabouts a shattered hulk, or it may go down in the deep waters and be heard of no more—who knows? It should be well built and well found, its timbers tried, its compass sure, its captain wise, its watchman wakeful, its crew sober, the bark that lives on the sea and trades to and fro to foreign climes. And youth —how much more should youth be wary of itself? But there, I must not preach; that were too great a liberty to take with you; though 'a word spoken in due season how good is it,' saith a great preacher; and somehow the calm night, the solemn river, the evening song of the thrush, seem to invite solemn thoughts."

The force of his words is impressed upon me as I watch the flowing river, slipping away to that sea which once covered the entire country, but has now only left an inland reminiscence of itself among meadows and homesteads.

This old house of Elizabeth and the Newboldes is situated upon a narrow arm of the sea which has been left, as it were, upon the shore by Neptune as a token or relic of the days when great fleets anchored there, and warlike vessels assembled to go forth to meet the enemies of England at sea, or to conquer new possessions for the queen in previously unknown regions.

When I am about to leave, thanking the vicar for his courtesy, he makes some interesting and philosophical remarks touching the

different influences upon the mind of a story that is past and a story that is current; a story that is full of tradition and the color of a previous age; a story that we look back to, and one that is mounted with the familiar accessories of the period in which we live.

He tells me that, to his thinking, there is a greater human interest in the modern than in the ancient history of this old house, and in connection with which we might possibly discover the reason for that notice, "This House to Let," remaining so long without response on the part of persons seeking a "desirable mansion."

He thus piques my curiosity, and then, like the genial philosopher he is, invites me to go home with him to dinner; and since I feel so much interest in an old house, and can so well tolerate the conversation of an old man, he will tell me that modern story which is one of the most romantic and touching episodes of his clerical career.

CHAPTER II.

THE RUINED HOME.

I GO home with him to dinner, and find his house just the quiet, snug place that should naturally belong to a clerical philosopher who is content to spend his days with his books, his garden, and his handful of parishioners, outside the great world of life with its struggles and its conflicts.

After dinner the vicar tells me the story of the love-making and marriage of an artist named Newbolde, a young eccentric painter, who had recorded on canvas many of the picturesque scenes of this corner of Kent, and who had wooed and married one of the prettiest young ladies in Sandwich, an orphan with a small patrimony. Newbolde had had a rival for the girl's hand, in a somewhat aristocratic young fellow named Lucas, who occasionally visited the neighborhood from London. An educated young man, always well dressed, always calm and gentleman-like, Mr. Lucas had attractions likely to impress a thoughtless girl; but he was unpopular in Sandwich, if one could say that a man is unpopular in a place which he only visited from time to time, and with which he had no social or business associations.

Mr. Lucas was said to belong to a good family, and had, among men, the reputation of being what is called successful with women.

Newbolde, on the other hand, was born in the district. His family, a middle-class one, was well known. He had, as a boy, developed a remarkable faculty for drawing, and under tuition as a young man had become a successful artist.

Mr. Lucas had been introduced to the girl through some family connection, and it was a matter for jocularity among her friends that he was "tremendously smitten." She was, however, already more or less engaged to Newbolde, and between the period of Lucas's last visit (he had gone abroad, and nobody had heard anything of him for several years), Newbolde and his sweetheart were married.

"I married them," said the vicar, "and a very pleasant affair it was. By my advice, instead of making a fuss about spending the honeymoon abroad, and going to some unfamiliar place to make amusement for waiters and others in a foreign hotel, I advised them on leaving the church to go home for good. They were a handsome couple. She was fair-haired and had blue eyes. A *petite* figure, she was quite the belle of this old place, a trifle vain, however, and not of that constant, loving nature that Newbolde was. But, as I said before, a pretty, attractive woman. I am an old bachelor, and it was always pleasant to see Newbolde work, and to talk to him of his prospects; and I took a fatherly interest in the young couple, though I was but forty when they married, forty and a fogy."

The vicar tapped his snuff-box reflectively, and pushed a decanter of old Madeira toward me as he continued.

"They had been furnishing the old house for many months before the marriage, and you can imagine nothing more refreshing than the enthusiasm of Newbolde in the work. I recall the time as one of the pleasantest periods of my own life, the little part I took in looking on at those two people decorating their new home; adapting that old house of Elizabeth to the Victorian era; planting on the grand old base of British wainscoting the decorative touches of today; placing on the grand old carved mantelpieces modern jugs and jars full of flowers that date back their perfume and beauty even before the Flood. You can hardly believe that twenty years ago that house was a picture of wholesome life and beauty, the gar-

den a paradise; though you may not be surprised to know that all this was eclipsed by a domestic catastrophe, over which hangs the shadow of a cruel murder; the law had not evidence enough to proclaim it murder, but I do so without hesitation.

The vicar took a heavy pinch of snuff as he made this announcement, and handed me his box, as he went on to describe the marriage-feast and the settling down of the newly-married couple to their new duties and relations. Time goes on; two children are born, George and Margaret; and in the meantime, the result of the painter's success and the outcome of the sympathetic social qualities of his nature, Newbolde gradually develops a fatal disease—a passion for drink. The vicar describes in detail how Newbolde, from glass to glass, slowly but surely comes under the dominion of the demon, Drink; how he fails to fulfill artistic commissions; how his work degenerates; and how, in the midst of it all, Mr. Lucas turns up at Sandwich.

It seems that Mr. Lucas has met Newbolde in London, on one of Newbolde's necessary visits in connection with his art; that Lucas is at the time, or professes to be, a man of means. He meets Newbolde in an assumed frank manner; tells him that his dream, of course, has long since passed away; that they are, of course, no longer rivals, but friends. He has traveled all over the world since then, and looks now at life with a man's practical experience instead of viewing it from the standpoint of a boy's romance. He tells Newbolde that his friends are very few, his life a lonely one, and that he hopes Newbolde will look upon him, "for auld lang syne," rather as a brother than as the old enemy he possibly was years ago, under the influence of a foolish passion. He tells Newbolde that it is the duty of the victor to be kindly to the vanquished, and he can only say that, if Newbolde or his children should ever want a friend, he may count upon him, Lucas, to the last penny he has in the world, the last drop of blood he has in his veins.

Newbolde is a gentle, tender-hearted, unsophisticated fellow, and accepts these overtures in a friendly spirit. Whenever he goes to London, Lucas invariably meets him. They are members of the same club, and Lucas is always hospitably inclined, Newbolde never loth to join him in the wine which he is continually ordering. As time goes on, Newbolde talks to his wife of Lucas, and sees no reason why they should not all be friends, since Lucas is very *anxious to pay a visit* to Sandwich, and does not care to renew his

acquaintance with the place without being on good terms with the only people he cares about in the world, who live there. In due time Lucas comes as a visitor to Newbolde's; and it is evident to everybody, except Newbolde himself, that his designs are not in the interest of Newbolde's peace.

"I think I detected from the first," said the vicar, "the wolf in sheep's clothing; and it seemed to me that, whenever an opportunity offered itself for the degradation of Newbolde in his wife's eyes, Lucas always availed himself of it. Whenever Lucas came to Sandwich, Newbolde was more or less under the influence of wine, so much so, that on more than one occasion I ran the risk of losing his friendship through lecturing him upon his weakness."

The vicar gave me many illustrative incidents of Newbolde's ineffectual struggles with the demon, Drink, together with instances of the remarkable affection that existed between himself and his eldest child, the boy; an affection that was really a mutual adoration so strong as almost to excite the jealousy of the mother.

Said the vicar, "The instinct of Newbolde's son—his name was George—though a mere boy, was active enough to make him resent every overture at friendship or familiarity on the part of Lucas. The boy would neither play with him nor accept his 'tips';" very remarkable illustrations of a youthful antipathy, upon which the vicar dwelt with an almost fascinating interest. He described the boy's frolics with his father, his almost unnatural cuteness in cloaking the father's passion for drink, and gave pretty wayside instances of the boy's devotion to his sister Maggie. One could see the domestic pictures which the vicar drew of himself playing with the children in that old-fashioned garden; Lucas, the Mephistopheles of the scenes, looking on; Mrs. Newbolde, ashamed of her husband, and making mental comparisons between the slovenly inebriate and the clever, cool, well-dressed gentleman from town, whom she had in those past days of her youth thrown over for this dissolute painter.

And thus the time wears on, the husband gradually falling under the dominion of the fiend, Drink, the wife under the influence of the fiend, Lucas. I might dwell upon the details of this phase of the story, as the vicar did; but I prefer to sketch the domestic history broadly and in few words.

Eight years have passed. Newbolde has gradually fallen from his position. The household is almost dependent upon the small

income of the wife. With her respect for her husband love has gone also; with love and respect has departed pride in the house and its management. What was once an artistic paradise has become a slovenly, ill-kept, ill-regulated abode. But, in the midst of all this, the wife has still retained her singular beauty, partly arising, no doubt, from a constitutional weakness of character in which vanity was predominant. The vicar soliloquizes somewhat upon this trait of feminine character—before coming to the *dénouement* of his story—which is, first, the elopement of Mrs. Newbolde with Lucas, and the scandal it creates throughout Sandwich; and secondly, the strange realization of the situation by the inordinate sensibility of young Newbolde, the son, aged eight, who is left under painful circumstances with his infant sister, aged six.

The vicar describes the interest he and his friends felt in these children, and presently mentions the sudden disappearance of the girl, who is carried away under somewhat mysterious circumstances, though in due course comes ample explanation that she is with her mother, who could not live without her. The boy's grief and manliness are touchingly described by the vicar, in contrast with the almost calm, unspeakable sadness of Newbolde himself, who sinks into the wretched state of a dipsomaniac, with lucid intervals that illustrate in a grim sort of way his originally sympathetic and affectionate nature.

One day, near the bridge which crosses that attenuated arm of the sea previously referred to, he is found drowned, and there are attendant circumstances which point to foul play, and other attendant circumstances which cast, whether justly or not, a certain suspicion upon Lucas, strengthened by the fact that the little property of Mrs. Newbolde went to her husband on her marriage, to return to her, should she ever become a widow.

"The influence of the father's death upon the boy," said the vicar, "was something terrible. The sister did not seem to realize the sad business. How could she at six? One might say, How could the boy, for that matter, seeing that he was only two years older? He saw the poor body carried into the desolate house, saw it all wet and weird—a dreadful spectacle. He leaned over it and kissed the poor dead lips; and he seemed to have grown old, the poor child, as he looked up at me, and cried, 'He's murdered! murdered! That man Lucas has murdered my father! And I *will kill him!*' The little fellow raised his fist and shook it, and

clinched his teeth as a man might. 'God help you, my poor George!' I said. 'You must not say such dreadful things.' 'Oh, I must, vicar!' the boy exclaimed, 'and you should forgive me; I loved him so! That man has killed my father, and you say in the pulpit, a life for a life, and I will have his.' Misery had made the child prematurely old. I stooped down to comfort him, and flinging himself into my arms, he sobbed out, 'Oh, mother! mother! Maggie! Maggie! My heart is broken!'"

The vicar turned his head away to hide his tears, and handed his snuff-box to me, that I might, I suppose, have an excuse to sneeze, which I did.

As I parted with his reverence late at night, to wander along the dark streets to my lodging, it never once, in all my romantic reflections, occurred to me that it would be my fate to have my affections and fortunes bound up in the history of that "house to let" and its latest and most unhappy occupants.

CHAPTER III.

A MISSION OF VENGEANCE.

THE old house and the vicar's story kept me in Sandwich longer than I had intended to stay there, and excited in me an interest in the place with which I hope the reader will sympathize sufficiently to accept this brief sketch of it. I particularly hope so, because I want both of us, reader and writer, to have in our minds the color and atmosphere of the old times. Not that this story has to do with what is called history; but as the vicar's narrative is the modern story of an old house, so does this general narrative run to a great extent into historic streets, though in due course it will carry us "over the sea and far away."

The completest contrast to the port of London, in all these English realms, is the old-world port of Sandwich. An odd little town, it has crept within the shadow of Progress and retired from business. Its quiet streets are haunted by a thousand ghosts of strange, busy days. Dickens's chronometer-maker was not more outside the noisy track of customers than is the town and port of Sand-

wich, on the historic coast of Kent, great and famous in the glorious days of Shakespeare, Raleigh, and Drake. Of its antiquity, you may read in the British Musuem the following unique charter granting part of its revenues to the monks of Christ Church:

"Wherefore I, Cnut, by the grace of God, King of the English, and of the adjoining islands, take the crown from my head, and place it, with my own hands, upon the altar of Christ Church, in Canterbury, for the support of the said church; and I grant, thereto, for the sustenance of the monks, the port of Sandwich, and all the revenues of the haven on both sides, whomsoever the ground belongs to, from Pepernesse, on the east, to Mearsfleote, on the north, so far as a taper-axe can be thrown from a vessel at high water. The officers of Christ Church may receive all the profits, and no person to have any custom in the said ports except the monks of Christ Church. Theirs to be the small boat and ferry of the haven, and the toll of all vessels whatever coming into the haven, to whomsoever they belong, and whencesoever they come. If there be anything in the sea, without the haven, which a man at the lowest ebb can reach with a sprit, it belongs to the monks; and whatever is found in this part of the mid-sea, and is brought to Sandwich, whether clothes, net, armor, iron, gold, or silver, a moiety shall be the monks', and the other part shall belong to the finders. If any writings shall hereafter appear, which, under a show of antiquity, shall seem in any way contrary to this our grant, let it be left to be eaten by mice, or rather let it be thrown into the fire and destroyed; and let him who shall exhibit it, whoever he be, do penance in ashes, or be made a laughing-stock to all his neighbors. And let this our confirmation remain for ever valid; and both by the authority of Almighty God and our own, and of our nobles who concur in this act, stand in full strength, like a pillar, firm and unshaken, against all the attacks of evil-minded people in succeeding times. But if any one, swelled with pride, contrary to our wish, shall attempt to infringe or weaken this our grant, let him know that he is anathematized by God and His saints, unless he make due satisfaction for his crime before he dies. Written in the year of our Lord's incarnation, 1023.

"I, Cnut, King of the English, confirm this writing inviolably.

"I, Alledmoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, confirm the prerogative with the Holy Banner.

"I, Alfric, Archbishop of York, confirm this benevolence of the king with the sign of the cross."

In addition to these signatures and attestations, the grant was signed by eight bishops, three dukes, and ten other persons. While this document demonstrates the importance of Sandwich in the days of Canute, there is a world of history between that time and the visit of Elizabeth in 1573.

Edward the Confessor made the city one of the principal Cinque Ports. He lived here in 1049, and superintended the fitting out of his great fleet to meet the invader, Godwin. The ships of Harold swam in the haven of Sandwich, and after the battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror ordered certain records to be made in Domesday Book concerning the town, notably mentioning that "Sandwich pays the king the same service as Dover does, though not so great, and the inhabitants, before the king gave them new privileges, paid him £15 per annum, and when the archbishop received it they paid £40 and 40,000 herrings for the monks' food, but in the year of the survey it yielded £50, and the herrings as before."

In the reign of Henry IV, Louis, King of France, burned Sandwich, but it was afterward rebuilt and united to the Crown in the year 1290, the monks of Christ Church surrendering their rights and receiving in exchange a certain manor in Essex. When at war with France, Edward III used to embark on his expeditions from this port, where the Black Prince landed in 1357, after the battle of Poictiers, with John, King of France, his son Philip, and other prisoners.

As I stood in the deserted city on the morning after the vicar's story, the ancient Cinque Port reminded me strangely of the grass-grown streets and decaying wharves of Nathaniel Hawthorne's native town as described in the "Scarlet Letter."

Though it is only sixty-eight miles from London, and some seven or eight from Ramsgate, and not exactly out of the highway of the world's business, the people in the streets stared at me curiously as I lounged here and there in contemplation of the sleepy old borough. Like Salem, Sandwich had been a bustling town, but had decayed and passed away, so far as its commercial and mercantile importance is concerned, though still boasting local authorities whose power has come down to them from its palmy days. There is an old manse, too, in which the famous American

would have delighted, and where he might have found inspiration.

But Sandwich has a record far older than Salem, and it bristles with incidents of plunder, piracy, and war. In the autumn of 1457 Marshal de Brèze landed in the night, and having surprised the town, set it on fire, after slaying the mayor and the principal inhabitants.

Salem had not the questionable advantage of having European neighbors, or it might possibly have matched Sandwich in regard to warlike horrors. The town was no sooner partially restored than the Earl of Warwick pillaged it. Edward IV. however, restored the prosperity and dignity of the port. He walled it in and fortified it, and levied the cost in a duty on wool. In 1483 the harbor began to silt up, and to-day Sandwich stands in the midst of meadow lands two miles from the sea-shore upon which it was originally built.

Sandwich has literally migrated. The men who knew it as a port and harbor, with ships of war and rich argosies floating in the offing, should they revisit "the glimpses of the moon," would seek it in vain. They would come ashore according to map and compass, and find meadow lands covered with sheep; here and there an ancient homestead would delight the eye; if they came in the spring of the year, and cared for wild flowers, they would find "lady-smocks," "May-blobs," and "sweeps," flourishing on the banks of dikes and water-courses; they would come upon an old highway where their ships had ridden at anchor, and they would find village groups drinking ale at wayside inns where they had embarked at docks and wharves. But no Sandwich would meet their eager gaze. They would see a narrow, sluggish river creeping from the sea through miles of daisy-dotted lands, velvety green. Inquiring their way in the direction of a square church tower in the distance, some two miles from the sea, they would find the remains of the lost city, right away in the country, on the banks of that creek-like river of salt and mud, which, with a stray brig or bark floating lazily on the tide, represents the only living reminiscences of the days when Sandwich was a famous port, where the Gauls found a commodious haven, and over against which the Romans erected fortifications, still partially extant, rising to view nowadays amid cornfields and waving trees, instead of frowning over a busy shore *fringed with gayly* decked shipping.

One of the peculiarities of this migrated port and town is the water supply. Not only has the sea left it stranded, but it has taken from the local springs all brackish flavor, and Nature coming to its aid, Sandwich rejoices in a fresh-water river that runs in and out of the old streets in the pleasantest fashion. It is always clear, fresh, and two or three feet in depth, and it constitutes the water supply of the town. Now it runs along a street, by doorways and under bow-windows, skirting the sidewalk, and rippling a constant song of delight. Here and there it pauses to supply a pump, or to answer the claims of buckets, brought down flights of steps connected with ancient houses. Then it will slip away under some old tunnel, to dash out again by green lawns and gardens, and to reappear in the quiet streets. The authorities of the town lead it hither and thither, confining it within stone walls, and tempting it through culverts. Once it pauses and swells out into a little pond for horses to drink at; but that is after its purer stream is locked up against the contamination of sea-water and the befoulment of a tanner who cleanses his skins in it, just before it joins that sluggish reminiscence of the sea which floated the Roman galleys, and tossed upon its bosom King Edward's famous lancers and stalwart British bowmen.

While, however, I tried to think of Salem and find contrasts with it in this decayed old port; while I tried to conjure up the figure of Hester Prynne in the strange old streets; and while I wondered if I should ever see America and the scene of Hawthorne's story, the pitiful romance of "The House to Let" haunted me, and I longed for the hour of dinner to arrive; for the vicar had invited me to join his hospitable board again, and had promised to tell me something more of the Newbolde family.

The vicar's house was half-timbered, half-plastered, not unlike the buildings of Shakespeare's day. You approached it through a garden, half lawn, half flower-beds, and entered it by a hall paved with red brick, the walls wainscoted, and decorated with engravings of old cathedrals. Right and left there were doorways into a study on one hand, a dining-room on the other, a staircase and passage to the kitchens faced you. There was a mixed perfume of gilliflowers and beeswax in the air, and a seventeenth century clock in a black oak case measured out the hours with clerical decorum. It was a home of rest and peace.

"It is *very good of* you to come again," said the vicar, as his

stolid servant man lifted the dish covers, after a brief grace had been said by his master. "I have few visitors, and it is like a kindly messenger with news from the great world to have a Londoner at table."

"I don't think my news has interested you half as much as your story of 'The House to Let' has interested me," I answered; "indeed, I have spared you much of my conversation to listen to yours."

"In an out-of-the-way place such as this," said the vicar, "we concentrate our thoughts more upon one subject than you people do in town; one striking event serves us for a long time; one romance may last us a lifetime. In London your feelings are broken up among many romances, and your daily news is both varied and exciting; here the hours go by in a quiet, dull round; and when a serpent crawls across our path of peace we mark the trail of it for many a long year. When I am turning over the soil, or training the roses in the garden at the Manse, I often think of Eden and the solitude of that ancient paradise when its first occupants had left it."

"Is that the name of the old house where the Newboldes lived—the Manse?"

"Yes; I wish you could have seen it in the early days of their marriage. Newbolde's studio was a little heaven. It had a calm north light. The walls were all paneled oak. The carved fireplace was a puzzle of beauty even to the learned Associations that came to examine it. Mrs. Newbolde took a certain amount of pride in it on these occasions, for her husband always gave the *savants* a luncheon in the studio, and she liked admiration, poor thing. She would decorate the table with flowers, and sit at one end of it, George at the other, and receive all the compliments that were paid to her with undisguised delight. And Newbolde would pass the wine—and once in a way take a trifle too much—the children would come in at the close, and little George would climb his father's knee, and Margaret coo at him from the nurse's arms. Ah! it was a beautiful picture of domesticity, and with a background of art, that made it very delightful. But oh, woman, woman—frailty, thy name is woman!"

The vicar rose, opened a window at the back, which discovered a grass plot, with a little stretch of that same gurgling brook I spoke of running through it. Two chairs and a table stood near by, with *pipes and a tobacco*-jar, and a small urn kept hot by a spirit-lamp.

"I think a glass of hot whisky and a pipe after dinner better than coffee and cigars, which is your town fashion. What say you?"

"That if you live quietly, and, as you say, prosaically, down here, outside the busy world, you know how to live, and I fully indorse this post-prandial siesta."

"Good," said the vicar, as he mixed the toddy and handed me a clean churchwarden pipe. "Five years ago George Newbolde sat in that chair, a fine young fellow of three-and-twenty, but looking more than thirty. I have not seen or heard from him since. After his father's death, the furniture and effects of the old place were sold by auction, part of the money going to him, the rest to his mother, who was represented by a local lawyer, under the authority of her power of attorney. It was dated London. She was never seen by any friend after she went away; nor has anybody that I know, or that George knows, seen her since, or Lucas, or the little girl Margaret. George lived with me for nearly four years after the manse was broken up. I hoped to have kept him until now, though he had occasional outbreaks of restlessness, and he would go and wander about the old house in a strange way, setting his teeth, and repeating silently to himself his vows of vengeance, for I would never encourage him in his passion of wrath, though to comfort him I would quote his favorite author, to the effect that in due time this man Lucas should meet with a retributive justice—

"'Put we our quarrel to the will of Heaven,
Who, when He sees the hours are ripe on earth,
Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.'

"Furthermore, I endeavored to press upon him the saying of a favorite book of mine: 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.' But he grew up with a brooding spirit, and one morning, at the age of somewhere about sixteen, he left me. The night before was such a one as this—a June night, with a sunset that touched the brook, and bathed us both in golden light. I sat here smoking, and George sat where you are. He did not smoke, but he sipped a little toddy. I thought it good for him, and we talked together of many things. He had learned a great deal in a few years. It was my delight to teach him all I knew; a little Latin, some theology, which he did not take to with patience; history, ancient and modern; such philosophy as I thought a fair combination of New Testament teaching and moral ethics; the poets, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and a

miscellaneous consideration of the natural sciences. He was apt, and we became companions; but the shadow of his childish vow of vengeance lay continually between us. I tried to exorcise the fiend, but without avail. The evil spirit had possession of him, and grew with his strength. 'Ah! forgive me, vicar,' he said, one day, as we were crossing the bridge over the river where his father was found drowned; 'but I did love him so dearly, and her, my little sister, that I go about with a mission of justice, not vengeance—justice; and I pray that one day he and I may stand here together; and I somehow think that I would have strength enough to drag him here if I met him at the other end of the world. If I believe in a Supreme power, which I think and hope I do, He has appointed me to be His minister of justice in this cause, for He knows who poisoned the mind of my poor weak mother, He knows by whose hand my father fell and died.' It was of no avail that I interposed my protest that Heaven had its own way of punishment for sinners, and that we could not influence its methods, and must not take the law into our own hands; he smiled defiantly, and his eyes flashed the determination that his unhinged mind had registered for itself. Poor lad! and he was but a lad, when he carried this burden. A dark, black-eyed, tall, lithe young fellow, tall for his age, and strong for his age, and with a settled expression of melancholy in his face. And, as I say, one June morning he was gone, leaving behind him a letter full of gratitude and thanks, which I did not desire, for I loved the lad, and felt half his sorrow, and the expression of a hope that we should meet again. He did not write all that was in his heart, or he would have added, 'I go forth on my mission;' and he has since told me that he had thought of telling me that his purpose was to go out into the world to hunt him down, the man who slew his father. I prayed for him earnestly, and in the little church where I officiate I put his name into the Church's appeal for those who are in trouble. A year after he left me I had letters from him, dated Vienna; later I heard from him at Paris, St. Petersburg, Hong Kong, and then from New York and San Francisco. They were only short epistles, telling me that he was well, and hoping that I sometimes thought of him as he did of me. And one day, some seven years ago, he walked into my study at dinner-time, a bronzed and bearded man, scant of flesh, but wiry and strong, and with a grip of iron. 'God bless you, vicar,' he said, wringing my hand; 'I am come to *dinner*.' 'God bless thee, George,' I said—and I would not have

known him but for his voice—'thou art welcome!' But I fear I weary you."

"No, indeed, you do not," I replied. "I begin to feel as if I had known your poor *protégé*."

"And as I sit holding your attention," said the vicar, "I feel something of the Ancient Mariner's persistence of narrative. But at least let me make you comfortable under the infliction. Another glass? Ten years old, this whisky has no headache in a bottle of it."

The fine old churchman laid down his pipe and mixed me another glass of toddy, and did the like for himself.

"What proofs had you that Newbolde, the artist, was murdered?" I asked.

"No proofs; but the certainty of instinct and circumstances. There was an ugly wound near the right temple, and suspicious marks on the throat. Against this was the theory that he had struck the abutment of the bridge as he fell, and that the discoloration of the throat might have been caused by the pressure of his neckerchief in a drunken fit, for the poor fellow had not been sober for a week. No proofs; but suspicion of an emphatic character and the previous crime of breaking up a home, a sin not less in the eyes of Heaven and man than murder."

"True," I said; "and deserving of as severe a punishment.

"Over dinner," went on the vicar, "George gave me some account of his wanderings. He had first gone to London; had drifted hither and thither in the great city, looking in the faces of men for Lucas, frequenting haunts of vice, and also seeking for him, as he said, in churches, 'because,' as he explained, 'I thought he might have put on sheep's clothing.' He said he had also looked for his mother. 'I thought she might go to the opera,' he said, 'as she loved dress and admiration, and I found myself gazing into the faces of young girls, thinking I might see Maggie, though I daresay I would not have known her if she had grown as tall as I had. But I never saw anybody like them. And I went to a theatre in the Strand and saw a play called "One Touch of Nature," where a father was hunting for his child who had been stolen from him with her mother, and it so touched me when at last he found her that I made a fool of myself, and broke into sobs in the theatre.'"

"Poor fellow!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, yes; what a noble disposition is overthrown in him," said the vicar, "and what a capacity for happiness."

"Does it not sometimes shake your faith in Heaven?" I asked, "when you see the worthy and the good oppressed with grief they had no share in creating?"

"No; for life is so short that the sufferings or joys of this world are but as shadows; they are transient as the breeze that ruffles the bosom of the river; it is the future that we should live for. And, as Campbell hath it, paraphrasing the Word itself, 'To bear is to conquer our fate.'"

"But, Mr. Vicar, what saith the Saviour Himself? 'Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe in Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea.' Think of the stumbling that thief, Lucas, caused to one child, perhaps to two; the suffering he planted in the breast of that boy in a childhood that otherwise might have blossomed into a happy manhood."

"It were to inquire too curiously into the might-have-been," said the vicar, "to consider who of these three persons were most to blame for George Newbolde's inheritance of sorrow—his father, who got drunk, his mother, who worshiped dress and vanity, or this Lucas, who traded on both to content his passion and his greed. When we set ourselves to allot blame and reward in this world, we undertake a task that even the angels might fail to accomplish. But let me finish my record. This poor fellow, George, with his mad—I had almost said murderous—mission, for he exclaimed as he left me that last time, 'I will kill him! it is ordained that I shall be his executioner'—this poor fellow, it seems, went from London to Paris, from Paris to Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg; to gaming-houses, theatres, operas, hotels; to Venice, Singapore, Hong Kong, thence to Japan, San Francisco, New York. When he had spent his money he became a cabman, steward on a ship, a sailor, a miner. 'Once,' he said, in Paris, 'I thought I had my man; I could have sworn it was he; I had driven him from a gaming-house, and was to take him to the Bois. At a likely spot I made him get out; he was an Englishman, and he threatened me; but I apologized, telling him I had a mission to capture an assassin, that I was a detective, and he overlooked my rudeness.'

"*He had dreams*, he said, that he would come upon him by mere

accident in this way, and his chief trouble was how to get the man to Sandwich to stand face to face with him on the bridge before he executed him.

"'This is madness, George,' I said to him; 'an affidavit from me, founded upon what you have said, might lock you up for life.'

"He looked at me strangely in response, and said—

"'Do you think I am mad? For I sometimes think so. But,' he went on, without waiting for my reply, 'I know that I am not. Cowards would call my words those of a madman; but let them tackle me on any subject or at any work, and see if I am not as sane as they. Ask the boys at San Francisco who is strong enough to have his own way when he wants it; ask the P. & O. captain if one of his stewards did his duty when the purser's room was on fire; ask the Havre shipowner if the young chap before the mast of the schooner Empress was mad when he stuck to the ship and worked her into port when the French crew had deserted her; and ask Father Campanani, the Jesuit priest at Chicago, whether I did not do justice to your teaching in the controversy I had with him in one of the newspapers there. Oh, no, my dear master, I am not mad; nor am I any longer in a hurry; nor shall I ever more go rushing about the world for Lucas. I know that he lives; I have been twice on his track—twice—the last time in New York; I can wait, I can wait!' And, filling his glass full of neat whisky, he drank it off without wincing. That troubled me greatly, even more than his words did, and I told him so and reminded him that all our affliction—for I always counted myself in with him as a fellow-sufferer—had probably arisen from drink. 'Ah, vicar,' he said, 'you like poetry; so do I. Let me commend to you those lines of the old dramatist:

"'"Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow;
You shall not do it to-morrow.
But while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death."'"

"He might have quoted Scripture," I could not help remarking to the same effect; "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!"

"Yes, and the devil may quote Scripture, as Hamlet says, but we judge by deeds, not words; by acts, not by quotations. I rebuked George, kindly, of course, but he only laughed at me and drank the more. And when the night was come he went out—I

could not restrain him—and I followed. He went to the bridge, and stood there for some time looking into the river. Then he took the path the men took when they carried his father's body home; and when he stood by the old house I laid my arm on his shoulder. He started, and cried out, and I said, 'It is only I, George.' 'God bless you,' he answered. 'Do you remember when you lost that antique ring, and we looked everywhere for it? You said at last, let us repeat all we did that day, and go over the ground bit by bit, and haply we will come upon it where least we expect it. I am here to profit by your lesson, and to strengthen my purpose. God bless you, vicar, and good-by!' He gripped my hand as he spoke, and left me, hurrying away quickly toward the churchyard. I followed, but lost him, and on inquiry at the railway offices I found that the man I described had taken the mail train to London."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"No, nor heard from him."

"And do you know nothing of the man Lucas, and the woman and child?"

"Nothing."

"It is a sad story."

"It is, indeed," said the vicar. "I pray to God it may be no worse."

As I wandered back to the old tavern where I was staying, I felt that the tragic story of George Newbolde had taken full possession of my mind. It was a summer night in "leafy June," and yet strange, chilly breezes came up the river from the sea. There was a moon, but it only shone now and then through chinks in a clouded sky. I went unconsciously a somewhat circuitous route to the hotel. Coming to the bridge where the vicar had last seen the painter's wretched son, and where that wretched son had seen his father's body taken from the river, I stood there and listened to the water lapping the banks, and the wind sighing up the river. Then I walked past the ruined home, a bat whirring by me as I lingered at the doorway, and the cry of a night bird saluting me overhead. I heard the ivy tapping at the blind windows, and felt all the desolation of the scene in my heart. As I turned away, the wind coming across the garden wafted the perfume of June roses into my face. It was like the faint memory of happy days. Perhaps, looking back, I put this interpretation upon it; for in those days I had not felt the *happy anxieties of* a first love; and this experience is filled with a

fine collection of tender sentiments, with which we decorate the most prosaic incidents of life.

I do not believe in dreams, except in so far as they may sometimes interpret incidents past or to come, which our own actions, thoughts, and reflections have shaped. But when to-day I look back over the curious and romantic details of my own life, it seems more than strange that on the night of the vicar's story I should have dreamed that Fate had selected me as its chief instrument in an act of vengeance executed under the most unlikely, unlooked-for, and dramatic circumstances.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER THREE YEARS.

THINGS had gone wrong with me in many ways since that holiday visit I made to a corner of Kent.

What may not occur in three years? Look over your own record and think. It is only, as it were, the other day that I was sitting at the vicar's table, free, independent, happy. There were possibilities in the future that on reflection might cause me a little anxiety. I had no particular reason to reflect, and I did not.

But what a tangled path was before me!

Since I got into the train at Sandwich to go home to London, on that pleasant summer morning three years ago, I had been plucked at college, fallen in love, quarreled with my family; and in a wild moment of despair I resolved to cross the seas and seek my fortune.

America had always had a special charm for me, ever since the first novel I had read by Cooper, and recent new discoveries of gold and silver inspired me with hopes that were as glorious as they were quixotic. I had no practical knowledge of mining, but I was blessed with a strong constitution. I was born of an aristocratic family; but I had almost a religious respect for labor. I was well educated; though I failed to obtain a degree at Oxford. While I had some facility with my pen, I could also ride and shoot, and once I had mowed half an acre of heavy grass for a wager.

"In America," I said, "there is no degradation in honest labor. A young fellow may be a carter one year and a congressman the next; he may be a dock-laborer to-day, and if he makes money to-morrow in the same city decent society does not say to him, 'Get *out, you must not speak* to us, you were a dock-laborer yesterday.'

I am strong, willing, not a fool, not quite penniless, and have I not you as a stimulus to exertion, you, my dear, dear Margaret?"

Yes, her name was Margaret Willoughby. She little knows how much I have suffered for her sake. But let me not say for her sake, seeing that there was underlying all I did the selfish desire of earning money enough to make her my wife. Uncivilized people would call it getting money enough to buy her. So far as her father (he called himself her father) was concerned, he would not have quarreled with the phrase—he was ready to sell her. As for me, had she been a slave in the market, and I a rich man, I would have bought her and set her free. Then when she possessed her liberty, I would have laid my life and fortune at her feet.

How strange is Destiny, Fate, the Future, or whatever it may be called! When I sat at the vicar's table and marveled at his opening a trap-door in his dining-room to drop his wine-bottle into the river as a cooler; when I listened to his story of the old house; when I wandered about the deserted garden and looked over the wall at the tide slipping out to sea, I had never heard of nor seen my love; I was enjoying a vacation rendered necessary by overstudy; and I had no idea that the year following would see me upon the ocean going forth "to seek my fortune" in a strange land.

Yet since then New York had seen me almost a waif and stray in her commercial quarters, seeking a clerkship; Brooklyn had cast me off as "a clever fellow," if I could only "find my vocation;" Washington had given me gentleman-like but profitless employment; St. Louis had made me the driver of a mule team; and Chicago had taught me to speculate in corn and pork. For you must know that I carried from London a credit note of two hundred and fifty pounds, and I swore to myself that should be my nest-egg. I vowed if I could not increase it rather than break into it I would starve.

And I nearly did starve in New York. I think it must be harder for a poor fellow to live in the Empire city than in London. It was fortunate for me that I discovered the free-lunch houses. I lived for three weeks on one "good square meal for ten cents" a day. But I stuck to my nest-egg. Brooklyn honored me with a clerkship in a dry goods store, but complimented me most on my knowledge of literature and London. St. Louis introduced me to a humble knowledge of the wool trade; and the great rival city of Chicago made a telegraph clerk of me. In three months I was promoted to

quite a responsible position. The newspaper dispatches passed through my hands, I had saved a hundred dollars. Two young fellows who had associations with the Board of Trade took me to the Exchange, I bought some hogs; on paper, of course. I made five hundred dollars. I wrote home to Margaret that I was indeed making my fortune at last. By the same mail I told my mother that I had at last discovered the highway to wealth; and that she might look for me coming home, in a year or two at the most, a millionaire. For my two friends said my knowledge of European politics, which were at that time in a very troubled state (Europe seemed to be on the eve of war), gave me a tremendous advantage as a speculator in wheat and pork, two commodities that went up and down in the market to the tune of European probabilities and possibilities.

At the height of my success I fell into the lowest depths of loss and disaster. I was "broke," and so was my nest-egg. In my despair I had cashed my credit note.

It was about this time that the fortunes of the "Revenge" silver mine were much talked of in Chicago. I had read with great interest in some newspaper before I left England an account of the discovery of silver at Drummond's Gulch, and remember to have thought the massacre of Indians a piece of shocking barbarity; but the cablegrams had, it turned out, only given us half the story. I mention the affair in this place because a stranger in the Grand Pacific Hotel at Chicago recalled it to my memory in a curious and unexpected way, and also because my fortunes became mixed up with those of that wonderful region beyond the Rocky Mountains.

Drummond's Gulch is named after the man who received it from the Indians. It is a simple story. Ten miners from California prospected this region. Not far from a picturesque bend of the Gunnison river they were surrounded by Piute Indians. Both sides fought desperately. The whites knew they must either conquer or die. They gave no quarter and expected none. All but one of them fell. Boss Drummond, whom they had elected captain, escaped, carrying with him a wounded comrade. Under cover of the night he brought his friend out of the fight into the Bush, in spite of his own desperate hurts. The Indians were too much mauled to go in search of Drummond, who succeeded in conveying his *friend to a hunter's* post on the river. Here they were both cared

for; but only Drummond survived, and it was many days before he was fit to travel. His protectors were a small party of American trappers, who had in their company several friendly Indians of the Ute tribe, by whom he was eventually conveyed to the nearest white settlement. Here he succeeded in recruiting a new company of adventurous prospectors, who went forth not only in search of mineral treasures, but pledged to a bitter vengeance on the Piutes.

They succeeded in obtaining both; they surprised an Indian village; the work was short, sharp, and bloody. Among the trophies of their victory they found relics of the murdered whites. Drummond lost three of his men. The Indians, twenty in number, were killed to a man; the squaws and children were supplied with food and driven forth. A strong stockade was built and fortified, "a cemetery begun" with the three dead whites, and a bonfire made of the village and its dead defenders, who were cremated among such household gods as the new comers did not care to annex.

A vein of coal was discovered near a creek of the river; galena lodes, carrying cerussite in limestone, were next found in abundance, and finally their investigations led to silver mining operations on a fairly large scale. Drummond and his friends exhausted their capital within twelve months, but secured considerable property rights, and were soon enabled to attract fresh capital and fresh hands.

Within two years the "Revenge" silver mine at Drummond's Gulch was well known as a great property, and the site of the Indian village was alive with the pioneers of a new world. A "preaching shop," bar-room, printing establishment, and general store, laid the foundation of a future city. It was indeed in its infancy when I arrived there one evening in the fall, the only passenger by the first mail stage that had ever started thither from Kimballs, which was itself little better than a mining camp, twenty miles from Gunnison, that had just built its first schoolhouse.

How came I to go to Drummond's Gulch? you naturally ask. Well, it was in this wise. One evening, the very day I was "broke" at Chicago, I was sitting in the great hall of the great hotel there, wondering what I should do, when a stranger entered into conversation with me. He was a tall, dark, black-haired, bony fellow, rather pale, and he smoked the largest cigar I had ever seen. He had brown eyes, was clean-shaven, except for a grayish tuft of hair on his chin, and he wore jack boots.

"You look kinder blue," he said.

"I can not look bluer than I feel," I answered.

He handed me a cigar, and beckoned a darkey.

"Give the gentleman a light."

"Yes, sah."

The colored attendant went to the counter, brought a match, lighted it on his breeches, handed it to me, and I blew a cloud after him as he shuffled over the marble floor.

"Poker?" asked the stranger.

"No," I said,

"Pork?"

"Yes."

"You look it."

"And wheat," I answered.

"So," he said, smoking. "I'd rather lose ten thousand dollars at poker, and have a good time, than win twenty at cornering pork; it's a mean business."

"It is," I said.

"Broke?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Dead broke?"

"Dead," I answered.

Some fellows might have resented the inquisitiveness of the stranger. Not I. The most superficial observer can tell when a stranger means to be rude, and when he is sympathetic, when his questions are the result of mere curiosity, and when they are intended to be kindly.

"English?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Ah," he said, chewing his tremendous cigar, the fellow to which I chewed in friendly sympathy, for there was something generous in the man's manner, though he had a curious, uncouth, brigand-like appearance generally. "Come out here to make money?"

"To try."

"Can't do much that way in the old country?"

"Takes so long."

"Pork ain't no good for a boy?"

"No; I made money at first."

"Novices always do; I'd always back a granger in his first hand."

"*Would you?*"

"And the greenest player's first bluff. Are you a college chap?"

"Yes."

"Thought so; knew two of 'em at Tombstone; I trusted 'em, and they paid up like white men. Ever heard of Drummond's Gulch?"

"I have."

"Go there—try silver. Pork disagrees with stronger financial digestions than yours. I like you. You are one of them Britishers who tell no lies when you are dead broke, and don't want to beg; stranger, I believe in you. My name is Manwaring Wilkess; I am a Tombstone city banker. I will give you a letter to Drummond, and I will lend you a thousand dollars to start you. Let's have a drink and say no more about it."

We did have a drink; we did say no more about it; and, with a thousand dollars in my pocket-book, the next day I started for the Rockies and Drummond's Gulch.

"You are just the chap for Drummond; what he wants is a secretary as will look after his affairs, and not let every loafer skin him when he's drunk."

"Oh, he gets drunk?" I said.

"As thunder; but don't you mind that. He's a bit of a crank when he's sober, and don't you mind that. When he's drunk he's either for cuddling a chap or shooting him; and he'll chuck his money away, or fight for other fellows' pocket-books at poker, like a Piute Indian after a wounded scalp. That's Boss Drummond to his boots, you bet!"

"I don't bet," I said.

"Oh, you don't," he replied. "What do you call cornering in pork?"

"Dealing in hogs," I said, smiling, for he had thrust a bundle of notes into my hand.

"You'll do," he said. "Hard money is better than profits in paper; silver licks pork; I've tried both. Give my love to Boss Drummond; tell him Manwaring Wilkess is your friend—good luck to you—and tell me how you get on."

And so we parted; he, as he said, for his "sweet a home as ever you see," at Tombstone City; I for the Rockies, and the scene of the last fight between the reds and whites at Drummond's Gulch.

CHAPTER II.

I MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE BOSS OF DRUMMOND'S GULCH.

"Do I know Manwaring G. Wilkess, youngster? Why, yes, I know 'Manny Wilks,' and that's the same fellow," said a bronzed athlete, in canvas trousers and a red shirt, standing in the doorway of "The Castle," as the local bar-room was called.

"Here is a letter from him," I said.

"'Dick Drummond, the Boss of Drummond's Gulch,'" read the athlete, repeating the address on the envelope. "Yes, that's what they call me; that's my nickname."

"I met Mr. Wilkess at Chicago," I said, "and he was good enough to say that—"

"He is a friend of mine," interrupted the boss, as he opened my letter. "That is so, and if he wants me to prove it, he has only to say so. We are chums in a way, and like each other. He was one of the first in at Tombstone; I was the first here. That gives us a sympathetic affinity, as you would put it, being a scholar—"

While he was talking he was reading my letter.

"One of them college chaps, he says you are. Well, no matter whether it's true or a lie; you are welcome on this letter," he said.

"I was educated at Oxford, but couldn't take a degree," I said, "and I don't want to be considered a scholar, nor anything more than a laborer; I want to work and earn money."

"'Make him your secretary—that's the idea,' your introducer says," the boss replied. "What do I want with a secretary? But there, come in. Have some lunch? Is this your trunk?"

"Yes, I'll have some lunch," I said, "and that's my trunk."

"Here, Lady Ann," said the boss, to a middle-aged woman who was leaning on a shapely elbow that rested on a rough counter, "what can you do for my friend?"

"What can *you* do for him, is more to the point, I should say?" she answered without moving.

"I can pay for anything he wants and for all you can do for him," was the quick reply. "Can he sleep here?"

"No, he can't," she answered.

"Anyhow, you can give him some lunch, and I'll have some, *too.*"

"Jim!" she screamed, still without moving; "lunch for the boss and his friend."

A negro appeared and laid a napkin upon a small table in a corner of the bar-room. Upon the napkin he placed glasses of ice-water (it is a very long way from civilization on the American continent where you can not get ice), a dish of pickles, another of crackers, two pats of butter, some strips of corned beef, a box of sardines, and a piece of cheese.

"A bottle of wine," said the boss.

Lady Ann beckoned Jim, and pointed to a cupboard on her side of the counter. He opened it, took out a bottle of champagne, uncorked it, filled two glasses, and placed them before the boss and myself.

"Won't you honor us?" asked the boss, turning to the lady, and at the same time directing Jim to bring another glass.

"I'll put my lips to it," she said, languidly; "here we go."

As she raised the glass to her lips we lifted ours, and repeating her salutation, "here we go," all three of us tossed off the wine.

"His lordship out?" inquired the boss, inviting me in dumb show to fall to.

"Gone to the hut with the whisky you ordered; it came by the stage."

Then without further remark, but in response to the sound of voices high in quarrel in an adjoining room, she disappeared.

"There's a faro bank inside," said my host, "and she keeps the boys quiet. Lady Ann's the only woman in the Gulch. They call me the boss, but she *is* the boss."

"A fine woman, and has been beautiful," I said.

"Yes, quite celebrated, I believe, as a girl in New York, and was a Queen in her way among a certain set in Frisco," he said.

"You call her Lady Ann?" I remarked, inquiringly.

"Her husband is Sir Thomas Montgomery—so the story goes—a real sweet little thing, as she sometimes says herself—a young English baronet, who was obliged to leave his own country within a year of coming into his title. It is quite a romance in its way; he is a mild, blond, simpering youth, a good deal of a fool, but recites poetry like an angel, and writes it too, sometimes. We call him Sir Tommy, oftener Tummy, and he is quite a character in his way. She took a fancy to him at Frisco, and he to her; so much so, that

he proposed to her and married her. The miners came in for miles to the wedding—right over the mountains from Greystone, over the Lowland Pass, from Timberline, and I don't know where; and the fun was kept up for a week. Two funerals finished it, though the row was over poker, and had really nothing to do with the wedding. Manny Wilkess took an interest in the pair. It was through him they came here. They had ten thousand dollars, which they invested in Revenge Shares, and the only bar-room and gambling-saloon that we sanction here. Lady Ann has no rival; all the men worship her, and her word is law."

When her ladyship returned from quelling the disturbance, I took quiet opportunities to glance at her in a furtive, respectful way. She was, I should say, a woman of thirty-five, an oval face, olive complexion, dark wavy hair, a large mouth, blue eyes, a trifle bloated as to figure, a woman whose life was told in her face; a blighted flower, a handsome creature who had been born under a malignant star; a child of the gutter who, snatched out of vicious surroundings when young, might have been a brilliant woman of Society.

She was expensively dressed in gray silk decorated with crimson ribbons, her dark wavy hair bound close to her head. It was her clear blue eyes that impressed you at first sight of her; they were an incongruity, but a fascinating incongruity, taken into account with her olive complexion and her black hair.

"They'll get to shooting," she said, as she leaned once more on the counter, "'Ugly Sam' and 'Bill Hicks,'" she said. "'Sam' had his iron out, and the other would ha' bin there right away if I hadn't gone in. I can't always be at their elbows."

"I wouldn't try," said the boss; "if they would only guarantee to kill each other outright when they begin I think we could spare them."

"I hate shooting," she answered.

"So do I, but it makes a change; gives the boys something to talk about," said the boss.

Then turning to me, he said, "You'll find the Gulch rather dull."

"Oh, I don't know that; you can make it lively sometimes, nobody more so."

"You think so, Lady Ann?" he said.

"I guess he's been telling all about me; I can draw *his* picture *for you, mister,*" she said.

"Ah, you flatter me," he said, smiling; "but let me have another bottle first."

"Jim," called the hostess.

The darkey came, and the boss, raising his glass, said, "Here's to your ladyship."

"And 'here we go,'" cried she; but she refused to drink more than one glass; "and you know I only take it out of politeness," she said, "just to sweeten the bottle, as my little Tommy says."

"Now for my picture!" said my host; "as our new comer must share the hut with me, at all events for a day or two, he may like to know what his host is like."

"Why don't you introduce him? I thought you Englishmen were all such hands at what Tommy calls ceremonial."

"I beg your pardon, Lady Ann," said my host, with somewhat of a sarcastic air. "Let me present to you—"

Here he thrust his hand into his pocket, and pulled out Wilkess's letter, and having looked into it, he continued—

"Permit me the honor of presenting to you Mr. Hickory Maynard, a friend of our friend Manwaring G. Wilkess, Esq., of the Tombstone Solid Bank."

I rose and bowed.

"That will do, Mister Sarcasim; I only wanted to know his name."

"Hickory I am called by my friends," I said.

"Very well, then, Hickory, I don't envy you. Dick Drummond is the devil."

"Thank you," said Dick.

"More or less of a crank when he's sober, and he ain't full tonight; he's crazy outright when he's drunk. I ain't going to say a word afore his face that I wouldn't say behind his back."

"Go on, Lady Ann, you are always original," said the boss.

"And a truth-teller," she said.

"Yes, I will own it; though the truth should not always be told."

"Tell it and shame—"

"Me?" said Dick.

"And shame the old 'un,'" she went on. "Some men ought never to drink."

"Where would the 'Castle' be then?" asked Dick.

"Bust!" she exclaimed; "and a good job, too; I don't want to

stay in it. Sir Thomas and me could do without it, and would, only it gives him occupation, poor little chap; he'd go wrong if he was idle, and I'd go wrong if I didn't live among a crowd as wants keeping in good order and having an example set 'em."

"By Jove, it's true," said the boss; "but go on, tell Hickory what I'm like when I am a nice example."

"A fiend, a regular crank as nobody can do anything with," she said. "It's a word and a blow with some boys, it's a blow and a word with you. Your pistol first, your remarks after; that's you."

"I'm a brute, eh?"

"Yes, a brute; and yet you're mostly right. As I say to Tommy, he's a beast, but the others is generally in the wrong; though I have heard some of the boys say they'd rather have him on the drunk than on the sober lay, when he sulks and has the blues, and goes prowling about like a bear with a sore head."

"A sore heart, Lady Ann," said the boss, "would be a better simile."

"Well, a sore heart if you like, and grinding his teeth, and walking miles on miles, and staring at the mountains, and looking like a man as has held two pairs, and been bluffed out of the pot by a broken vengeance. Tommy say's you've something awful—*hawful*, he says, bless his ignorance—on your mind."

"Tommy's right," he answered. "Out of the mouths of babes is the truth spoken."

"Indeed!" she said. "Tommy's no babe; the Gulch hasn't put his courage to the test; I guess whenever it does he'll be found all there, just as his ancestries was at Aggincourt, you bet."

"I believe it," said Dick, "though I am a brute with a blow and a word, and I know Tommy's a deuced sight braver than I am."

"I don't say that by a sight," she answered.

"But I do."

"What! and the Gulch is called after you 'cause you won it with your blood, just as Tommy's ancestries did old England. Go on, boss, you can't drag compliments out of Lady Ann that fashion."

"'*Necesse est facere sumptum qui quærit lucrum*,'" said Dick, surprising me by his burst into the classics not more than he surprised Lady Ann.

"Well?" she said. "Now, sir, he is getting ugly."

I looked at her inquiringly.

"He'll call for whisky next," she said, "and he'll not have it to-night."

Dick smiled grimly and emptied his glass.

"Well, give it a name. What's your Double Dutch mean? Sir Thomas is not here to tell me."

"I beg pardon, Maynard; a fellow who quotes Latin is a cad; I have always noticed it, but I have memories, and they break out into the words of a dear old scholar, who was my only friend."

"Don't mumble, or I shall go away. Now, hurry up, and translate that gibberish."

"It means that a fellow can't expect to win anything unless he stakes something. We pooled our lives in the Gulch and busted the Indian bank. That is my reply to your compliment, Lady Ann."

"Then why didn't you say so? Ah! here comes Sir Thomas; I hear him swearing in poetry at the ostler, 'Arry, as he calls him."

"Then we'll go home," said Dick, rising. "Charge the lunch, give my love to his lordship, send 'Arry up to the hut with Mr. Maynard's baggage; come on."

He took my arm, and we strode out together into the sunset.

"I believe you are in luck," he said, as we walked along the rough road. "I like you; perhaps that is good for you—it may be bad; but if you want money you are in the center of the richest fields of gold, silver, copper, and coal in the world. You can not begin to extenuate its prospects. This Gulch, which is bursting with silver—yes, bulging with it—is but an atom in the general sum. And if I possessed all of it—if it were all coined into American eagles or English sovereigns, and packed here to be carted wherever I liked, I would give every coin of it for an interview of ten minutes with—"

CHAPTER III.

FROM "THE CASTLE" TO "THE HUT."

"BUT let us talk of something else," he said, stopping short, as he was about to speak the name of some person he either loved or hated. "I must play the host better than that. Lady Ann said she pitied *you, because she* thinks I am a morose, gloomy, misan-

thropical wretch, half crazy when I'm sober, a fiend when I'm drunk. I will try and be on my good behavior as long as you stay at the hut, at all events. One must not forget all one's good manners in the remembering of one's miseries, and when we are outside the pale of civilization, it is a duty we owe to ourselves to keep our humanity to the fore, eh?"

"The Hut" was Drummond's log cabin, one of the roomiest and best furnished in the Gulch. Situated a short distance up the mountain that overlooked Indian Valley, it was protected from the north wind by an overhanging ledge of rock, and it had an outlook to the south, where an arm of the Gunnison River wound round an island that looked like a living poem set in gold and silver, so varied were the lights and shadows that fell upon the water, so dream-like the palms and shrubs that flourished on the land. The sun had gone down when we stood at the doorway, leaving a ruddy glow in the sky, which was presently mocked, in the darkness that shut in the hut from the north, by a cloud of fireflies.

An old negro met us at the door.

"Whisky and cigars, Wash!" said Dick.

"Yes, sah."

"And make up a bunk in the parlor for this gentleman."

"Yes, sah."

"I have three rooms here," said Dick. "This one, where I sleep and eat, the parlor, where I keep my books and things, and the kitchen, where Washington, my head cook and bottle-washer, has his turned-up bedstead. I am quite a swell, I can tell you, in the matter of a home. There is something of the pride that apes humility in calling it the 'Hut.' But when Lady Ann insisted upon calling her whisky-shop 'the Castle,' I had no alternative. For a log cabin, I think, when you see it, you will say it is not so bad."

And he showed it to me at once, Wash having lighted the candles. The rooms were *en suite*, Dick's room, the parlor, the kitchen; the parlor being set back, so that there was a passage-way past it from the kitchen into what might be called the general room.

There was a sheet-iron stove in the kitchen, with an oven and a hot-plate; a table, two chairs, a roughly-made cabinet, which contained Wash's bed; and on the walls were several dried hams, sausages, and bags containing corn, herbs, and other articles of diet; and on some shelves quite a collection of tinned meats and bottled *fruits*.

"And here's a refrigerator," said Dick; "got that luxury from Gunnison a month ago, and the stage brings us ice once a week."

The parlor was a small square room, with a few books on a set of pine-wood shelves; a collection of Indian trophies of arms and skins; a couple of English rifles, and two pairs of revolvers; a map of San Francisco, and two pictures from the "Illustrated London News" and "Frank Leslie's Newspaper," filling up one end of the room, except so far as the bunk or sofa upon which I was to sleep was concerned.

"And now let us try Sir Tommy's new tap; it is supposed to be very fine."

He pointed to a wooden arm-chair near the stove, which was cold, the weather being warm, took one himself, and we sat down. It was a cozy apartment, partly draped with curtains and skins, a great plaited straw mat on the floor, the walls being of planed planks nailed upon the logs, and giving an air of finish and comfort to the whole. Two great chests by the stove were covered with rugs and skins, and they looked like ottomans. In a small recess there was a bed, and by the side of it a table with a lamp upon it and a book.

"Ah, you see I read in bed when I can't sleep; sometimes I go down to the river; sometimes up the mountain. I have led a queer sort of life here. When I am a millionaire counted in English gold I may leave it for another spell of travel. Oh, yes, I am a great traveler; I haven't lived here all my life."

Wash (this, as you see, is short for Washington, the name of Drummond's negro servant) gave us the whisky and cigars.

"That will do—only one glass to-night, no more. You can turn in."

"Tank you, sah," said Wash.

"Lady Ann spoke the truth, I do take too much now and then, but life is unbearable occasionally, and I must—can't help it; but to-night you can do the drinking and I'll do the smoking. And so you have come out here to make money? Well, as I said before, you have come to the right place, perhaps to the right man. What can you do?"

"Ride, fish, keep accounts, shoot, telegraph, buy and sell dry goods, dig—"

"Well?"

"Write an essay, turn a Greek hexameter, take a hand at poker,

join a corner in pork when I've money enough, speculate in fixtures, and come to grief."

"Good! And all for what?"

"To make money."

"You are what they would call a mercenary cuss, eh?"

"Yes."

"You don't look it."

"I am."

"What's it all about?"

"What do you mean?"

"This greed for gold. Is there a woman in it?"

"Well, yes, there is."

"Of course; one has only to look at you to come to that conclusion. What is she?"

"There are two."

"Two! Then, by Jove, you are lost. One is bad enough, but two —Heaven preserve you! for the old 'un can not, against two of them."

"One is my mother," I said, triumphantly.

"Humph!" he grunted.

"And the other, the lady I hope to marry."

"As bad as that, is it? Well, let us talk of something else. I had hopes of you; I thought you might have been badly treated, and that we could sympathize with each other, we two exiled Britishers; I hoped some woman might have got you into a scrape—debts you could not pay—or that some ruffian had come between you, and that you might be wanting money for the power it gives, to buy your way to vengeance, or, at all events, to best somebody, as they say. But you are only a good, honest, thrifty young fellow in love, who has come out here to find the money to buy a nest with. Well, that's all right; but, there, you see, I am a bit of a crank. What can I do for you?"

"I don't know. I feel sometimes as if nobody could help me, feel like going home again and giving up the struggle. Ah! Mr. Drummond, you do not know what a fight I have had."

"Don't call me Mister," he said.

"My trouble is not as prosaic as you think, nor my hopes so simple as you imagine. There is a ruffian standing between me and my dearest ambition; that is, if I dare call her father a ruffian. Indeed, my path is full of obstacles; my own flesh and blood are *against me.*"

"That is no new thing in men's troubles," he said. "But I have been inhospitable in my remarks. Cheer up; tell me all about yourself. Can you trust me?"

"Yes, indeed, I can," I said.

"My lad, you may; I never wronged man or woman, and I carry about with me a load of sorrow, and have in my heart and brain a mission of vengeance that would have broken up most men. You may trust me."

He took out of a sheath that lay on the window seat a knife that he had laid aside with his belt as we came in.

"There is a knife for the man it is my destiny to meet and to kill; but you are not he, my friend; here is my hand for you. I like you, and you are Manny Wilkess's friend. He lent me a pile of money to keep the biggest share of the Revenge Mine in my own hands, lent it without security; he is always doing that kind of thing, and has never lost a penny of it; and I owe it to him to be kind to you; that is all I owe him at the moment, for I've paid him back that loan, and deposited in his hands over a million dollars. Yes, I have made money very fast of late, and one day, if I cared to realize my stock, and—but, there! I don't want to talk about myself! let us talk about you."

He filled his glass twice while he was talking.

"You heard me say only one to old Wash, but he's a nervous old chap, and loves me like a dog, and I do get drunk now and then, that's a truth, but not on two or three glasses; don't be afraid. Now, Hickory, tell me all about yourself. How can I tell what I can do for you if you don't?"

"But you pulled me up so stiffly about women that I feel embarrassed."

"Oh, you needn't be."

"You feel no interest in any woman?"

"Yes, I do, in one; she *is* a woman now if she be living, though I only knew her as a child."

"Indeed!"

"As a child; she was my sister."

"Then I envy you; I have no sister, but I have one of the best mothers in the world."

"And I envy you," he exclaimed, rising from his seat, "for if my mother stood before me I would strike her dead!"

"No, no; don't say that," I replied.

"Well, well," he said, sitting down again and lighting a fresh cigar, "don't let us talk of me or mine. I took to you the first minute I saw you; and something tells me that it will be good for you, for both of us, that we should open out our histories to each other, honestly and true—who we are, what we do here, why we came, what are our objects in life—like two men who are going to be partners, eh? What do you say to that?"

"I am quite willing," I said.

"Then you shall begin. Fire away. To-night I am in the humor; to-morrow things may be different. Anyhow, count me your friend. One day I may want a partner, an ally, a comrade—more than all, a friend."

"I came to America to make my fortune, as I have already said."

"And you will, I feel sure."

"That I may marry the girl to whom I am engaged."

"Of course."

"I am that unfortunate young man, the younger son of an aristocratic family. My father was a spendthrift. He left his estates heavily mortgaged. My eldest brother was a true Maynard; he followed in his father's footsteps. He helped his brothers as well as he could, but he could not do much more than find them openings in the Government service. The youngest of six, I had but little chance, you may be sure, though, somehow, money enough was begged or borrowed to send me to Oxford. My mother, bless her heart, had some hopes of me, but she was very fond of me, and is now. Her love blinded her to my demerits. I had no head for academic learning. I was plucked, and snubbed by everybody in consequence, except her. She has a small income settled upon her in such a way that she can not part with it, and she lives on it with an old, trusty servant in Doughty Street, Mecklenburgh Square, London. I parted with her there eighteen months ago for two years, hoping to return a rich man."

"Did you hear Lady Ann call us the wolf and the lamb?"

"No."

"She did. She is a woman of observation, but there was more of the lion than the lamb in that promise of yours. Well?"

"You see, I was in love, and it's astonishing what courage being in love gives to a young fellow."

"Yes, I suppose it does," he answered, looking at me in a *curious, puzzled way.*

"She's the most delightful creature in the world; true as steel, good as gold—"

"Hold hard, Ned," he exclaimed; "all women are that until you find them out. Go on with your story, but don't trouble to throw in testimonials as to character."

"One would think you had been in love yourself, and had had a disappointment."

"I was in love when I was a lad, a lad of about ten."

"With your sister?" I asked, smiling.

"Yes, with my sister," he said. "She was several years younger than me. But, there, go ahead. I'll try and like that young lady of yours because I like you. What's her name? There! see what an interest I am taking in her."

"Margaret Willoughby," I answered.

He repeated the name, turning it over, as it were, reflectively on his tongue.

"She is an actress—against her will, though. Her father is a bad lot, I'm afraid."

"Margaret Willoughby," said my host. "Yes, it is rather a pretty name."

"You see, when I was plucked, I went to London and lived with my mother; but I insisted on doing something for a living, and, indeed, it was necessary that I should do so. But my brothers cut me because I took a clerkship in a merchant's office. I was not going to be a burden upon my mother. One of my brothers is in the Guards, another in the diplomatic service, a third was secretary of Legation. They all managed to get on pretty well. I earned two pounds a week in the city; and through a friend who was on the Press I used to go to the theatres a good deal. One night at the Adelphi I fell in love. She was not a star. She only played a third-rate part, but I saw nobody else when she was on the stage, and wanted to see nobody else when she was off. She was a pretty, gray-eyed, gentle creature. I went home and thought of her all night. It seemed as if I ought to pity her, though why I could not tell, unless it was that I associated her with the part she played. She was persecuted in the drama, and she suffered so sweetly that I had her troubles, I suppose, in my mind."

"She was only acting, lad," said Dick Drummond, interrupting me. "They are always at it. My mother was one of the loveliest women in the world, a voice so soft that you would have thought

her an angel—but, there! what the deuce am I talking about? Go on, don't mind me. It doesn't matter. I can bear it. I've been in training long enough, young as I am. Talk about the patience of Job—but, there, keep it up, Hickory, keep it up."

By this time my host was drinking hard, though he continued to watch me and to listen to me with unabated interest.

"I went to the theatre the next night again."

"Of course you did; just the thing you would do."

"And the following night also," I continued. "Then my Press friend took me to a tavern after the play and introduced me to one of the actors, who said I had better be careful, for the young lady was a modest, good girl, respected by the company; that she had a wretch of a father. The man came in while we were talking, and I was introduced to him. A tall, spare, middle-aged person, somewhat showily dressed, a trifle shabby, but with several diamond rings on his fingers. Fitzherbert Willoughby, they called him. He did not impress me favorably, but I made myself as agreeable to him as I could. I paid for his supper, and also for hot brandy and water, afterward. He talked to me about my family, professed to know my elder brothers, and hoped for the pleasure of meeting me again. He generally, he said, came to the 'Crown' tavern after seeing his little girl home from the Adelphi. My heart beat quickly when he referred to Miss Willoughby, and I said I usually looked in at the 'Crown' in an evening, though, to speak the truth, that was the first time I had ever been in the place."

"The moment a fellow is in love, as he calls it," said Dick, "he becomes a liar, it seems. But that is human nature, I suppose. Go on, old fellow."

"We met at the 'Crown' many times before I ventured to tell Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby how much I admired his daughter. He was not in the least offended. He praised her, and said she was his only solace since his wife's death. They had once been, he said, in flourishing circumstances, and had spent several years in foreign travel. His wife had died abroad. Their daughter was fond of artistic life, and wished to go on the stage; he supposed she sought in that occupation occasional forgetfulness of her mother, to whom she was devoted. Encouraged by the kind and familiar way in which he talked of her to me, I told him how much I should esteem the pleasure of meeting her. He invited me to come home and sup some night after the theatre. She generally had supper alone, he

said; but as I had honored them by taking an interest in her career, we would go home together one night and have a snack at his chambers. The night came at last."

"Yes, it always does," my host remarked, leaning back in his chair and blowing a cloud of tobacco smoke up into the oil lamp that hung from a beam in the roof above us, "it always does—only a question of time and patience."

CHAPTER IV.

I WISH MYSELF BACK AT CHICAGO.

THE next day the boss of Drummond's Gulch may be said to have begun his "bender," as a bout of drunken dissipation was called in these regions.

We breakfasted at six in the morning. He drank whisky; I coffee. He ate crackers; I did ample justice to the fried ham and poached eggs which poor old Wash cooked and served deliciously.

"Don't mind me," said my host; "I am not eating this morning, Wash will take care of you; I can't eat and drink at the same time."

"Soda water in der frigerator, Massa Drummond," said the negro.

"Let it stop there."

"Yes, sah."

It was a glorious morning. The door of the hut was wide open. The sun came streaming in. Whisky seemed quite an anomaly in such a scene. And the coffee was delicious.

"I roast it on de stove, sah, and grind it fresh."

"Have tried to make the hut bearable, you see—and Wash helps me all he can; don't you, Wash, you black nigger!"

"Yes, sah," answered Wash; "but I'se no black nigger, sah. I'se best cook dis side de Rockies."

"Get out!" growled my host, "you conceited old fool."

"Yes, sah," said Wash, scuttling away into the kitchen, and turning round as he left the room to beckon aside to me.

Dick Drummond lighted a cigar and went into the open air. Wash returned to me.

"Be careful ob him, sah, don't contradict de massa when de whisky's aboard—good, kind massa 'cept when he's full—deal trouble on his mind, Massa Drummond—forget himself sometimes—coax him as you would a kicking mule dem times, sah—"

"What the deuce are you mumbling about there, eh?" Dick exclaimed, coming back. "Get out, you imp of darkness, or I'll let daylight into your misbegotten carcass!"

Wash dodged as if he feared a blow, and I saw him no more until night.

"Let us go into the camp, and see what's going on," said my host.

We went.

It took the sun all its time to glorify Drummond's Gulch in these days—only a few years ago, though I am told it now bids fair to be as gay and bright a city as Denver itself. If, as I hear, Gunnison now boasts two daily newspapers, I see no reason why the Indian Valley should not have blossomed out of the dust and ashes of a mining camp into banks, churches, newspaper offices, theatres, and "elegant houses." I know that Denver rejoices in one of the most beautiful opera houses in the world. And what was Denver?

But our business is with Drummond's Gulch, the beginning of a city; with the budding civilization of an Indian valley in the mighty heart of the Rocky Mountains. And to think that this reckless drunken Englishman at my side should have sown the seed of a city that is to spread far and wide, rivaling Leadville, Denver, perhaps Pittsburg.

A plowed field, broken into furrows, is not always a delightful picture; yet later, when the green wheat is in bloom, and the red poppies gleam amid the emerald wealth of it, how splendid it is! Then is the summer of its days. The honeysuckle perfumes the adjacent hedgerow. The wild rose decorates it. The lark sings high up in the heavens, and all the world looks happy. Later the dark, uninteresting furrows torn up by the plow have produced the golden grain. The voices of the harvesters are heard, and the whetting of the sickle. The larks have reared their families, and by and by the song of the "Harvest Home" awakens the neighboring echoes.

So this valley of Drummond's Gulch shall change and be lovely once more, not with foliage and birds, but with human love and *sorrow (for both* are close together), and with the thankfulness of

well-paid labor. The scars you see on the hills, the rended trees, the broken-up rocks, the torn land, the burned forest, the bruised and blackened logs, the pathway thick with dust; these are the furrows of the miner's plow, these are the channels of seed, these are the rough preparations of the city that is to be. And when the sheriff, the schoolmaster, the parson, and the newspaper man shall take full possession, and the laugh of happy childhood shall be heard in the well-tended streets, then shall the rough pioneers move on, going further West.

Providence is no respecter of persons. The wildest and most reckless of His creatures are His instruments in founding the great frontier cities. Gamblers, thieves, disappointed lovers, broken-down traders, deserters from the army, unhappy sons of wretched fathers, waifs and strays of cities, outcasts, murderers, crews as ragged in their morals as in their clothes, have dug the furrows and sown the seeds of New Colorado, and planted civilized posts along the picturesque Santa Fé Trail.

It must have struck many a thoughtful man who has been mixed up with the beginnings of these American cities, that there is more of good than bad in human nature. The just, if rough, administration of many a mining camp, would shame the more pretentious governments of established cities, and professedly moral communities.

What a strange, wild, unkempt crowd it was that constituted the population of Drummond's Gulch! Hard-looking, sun-burned men, with long hair; bearded Herculeses, in sombrero hats, gaunt cowboys from an adjacent ranch; all of them with their trousers tucked into their long boots, and knives and pistols tucked into leather belts that girded their waists; one of them (a new comer I was told) wore a great diamond pin, and another a gold watch-chain thick enough to stall an ox with.

A great company of them were at "The Castle" when we entered it. They made way for us in a surly kind of fashion. Lady Ann nodded familiarly to us. She and Jim and his lordship were busy at the bar, serving out whisky. All the men seemed to be talking at once, except when they paused for a new act related by one of their number who had brought the news of a great find of silver west of the Elk Mountains.

"Who is fool enough to listen to Ugly Sam?" asked Drummond, stepping up to the bar and ordering "whisky, two glasses."

"A heap of us," said a young fellow at my elbow, "and a heap of us won't be sorry to move out of this hole!"

"Indeed," said Drummond, eying him with a wicked look, "like the dog that scents a boot, eh?"

"What do you mean, Drummond?" demanded the other.

"What I say, curse you!" exclaimed Dick, turning angrily upon him.

Lady Ann was between them before another word was spoken. She had slipped round the counter and elbowed her way through the throng on the first word Drummond had uttered.

"Now, I won't have it!" she exclaimed; "if you've got any extra strength to spare, Dick Drummond, go and take a pick and have a high old time in the Revenge; you shan't do it here!"

"Shan't!" he repeated, doggedly.

"No, nor you either, Tinker Bill; I have sworn that if there is another row in this shanty before the month is out, I quit! So there!"

"Then quit and be hanged to you!" exclaimed Dick.

"No, no," shouted the company as one man, and as one man the crowd drew its weapons.

"Look here," said a gray-headed man, with a solemn face, "look here, Boss Drummond, I am your oldest friend; we all kinder admire you and look up to you, except when you are on the tear. And then, by thunder! we hate and fear you, and pity you."

"Curse you, don't pity me—hate me if you like; but don't pity me. And if any six of you like to come outside and shoot—"

A sudden movement in the crowd was checked by Lady Ann putting her hand over Dick's mouth.

"Don't mind him, boys; you know he'll be right down sorry for it when he's sober," she said. "Mister Schwartz, with the diamond in his shirt, has ordered a basket of wine in the saloon; now if you love Tommy and me, and want us not to pull stakes and move off, go into the saloon; and Sir Thomas shall pitch you a recitation. There! Won't you, Tommy?"

"Yes, I will truly," said a womanish voice, the voice of an aristocratic scapegrace, the scion of a noble race, the tenth baronet of a distinguished family.

A weak-headed, free-handed, foolish young man, Sir Thomas Montgomery had drunk and gambled away both means and reputation in England, and had drifted through several fits of delirium

tremens into the region of the Rocky Mountains; first on board an ocean steamer; secondly, in a private car bound to the West; and thirdly, by way of a happy speculation in San Francisco. Here a wealthy gentleman who knew his family met him and gave him a handful of mining stock that saved him from the gutter; and then he fell into the dirty but kindly hands of the lady who nursed him, cured him, and married him, and became a lady of title.

Below the medium height, he had fair hair, parted down the middle, bluish, soddened-looking eyes, a fair beard, a weak mouth, and a slight lisp.

Dick Drummond leaned over the bar, drank whisky, and watched Sir Thomas, in a languid way, while that dapper young victim of dissipation was lifted upon a table in the gambling saloon (the door opened upon the bar and gave us a full view of the interior), and began to spout, in a by no means unmusical voice, "The Wreck of the Schooner Hesperus."

"This is your doing," said Lady Ann in an angry whisper; "he was on for a spell of good behavior until you came."

"I am very sorry," I said.

"What do you want here, anyhow?" she asked.

"No more than that which the others want—work," I said.

"Then go to the new ground they're talking of; we don't want you here," she said.

"Why not?" asked my host, looking up, "why not, my Lady Trumpery."

"Don't call me names, Dick Drummond," she replied, "or I may forget myself."

"Nothing new in that, eh?" he said, with a mocking laugh.

"Coward!" she said, still in a whisper, "and brute; I've saved your life many a time."

Then turning to me she said, "He would have been murdered in his bunk a month ago if it hadn't been for me, And that's what it will come to sooner or later if he don't turn up the drink. All the better for me if he's left me fifty thousand dollars of stock in the Revenge as he says. But I pity him for what he's gone through, poor wretch; he used to tell me and Tommy when first we came about his miserable life; but we struck the Gulch when he'd a sober fit on him."

Drummond suddenly pulled himself together, and stalked out *into the road.*

"Have you any influence with him?" she asked; "you seem a poor creature; why don't you lay hold on him if you're his friend, take his shooting irons out of his pocket, and get him back to the hut, where he can blow off his gas at Washington? D'ye hear?"

I began to wish myself back in Chicago. Being cornered in pork was better than being knifed or pistoled in Drummond's Gulch. I went bravely up to my host nevertheless. He was standing in the road, rocking himself to and fro in an irresolute drunken way.

"You've soon forgotten your friend," I said, assuming a defiant and angry manner. "I'll go back to the hut and pack."

"Pack?" he said, "what do you mean. Going to leave me—think I'm drunk?"

"No, not at all, I think you are inhospitable; I want my dinner."

"Wash 'll give you some," he said.

"Not alone, I won't go without you—come along."

I took his arm and he moved forward as I stepped out.

"Come along?" he said, smiling in a surprised and half-amused way.

"Yes, come along," I said, and dragged at him.

"Hickory," he said.

"Yes?"

"You're the fellow Manny Wilkess sent to me?"

"Yes, come along," I said.

"Yes, come along," he said, echoing me; "that's just like her, come along; I can hear her little voice now, God help her!"

Then he relapsed into silence, but kept up with me step for step.

"Plenty to do in the Revenge, she said, eh?" he remarked, as we passed the gorge where the trucks from the mine could be seen, "and they think I called it that because we got even with the Indians there!"

Then he laughed aloud and pulled me up. We both stood still.

"Come along," I said, again dragging at his arm.

"Did you say you were hungry?"

"Yes."

"Are you living with me?"

"For a day or two," I said; "come along."

Again he echoed me.

"*Come along.* Yes, I will. Am I drunk?"

"You were."

"Not now, eh? Can't afford to get drunk."

By this time we were once more at the door of the hut. The old negro was sitting on a log in the sunshine.

"How long have I been drunk, Wash?"

"Two weeks," said Wash, promptly, and making signs at me.

"Bring the bucket, you black son of Satan."

"Yes, sah," said Wash, moving the log on which he was sitting away from the door.

My host sat upon the log. The old negro brought a bucket of water and poured it over him. Drummond shook himself, closed his eyes, and waited for the operation to be repeated three times.

Wash then helped him to strip and dry himself with a rough towel, and brought clean dry clothes. My host rehabilitated himself as if nothing extraordinary had happened. Wash disappeared for a few minutes, and then returned, saying:

"Soup ready, massa!"

"Come along," said my host, leading the way into the hut.

"Will massa's friend have soup?"

"Yes, thank you," I said.

Drummond sat down before a bowl of rich tomato soup and drank it, not as if he relished it, but as if he were performing a solemn duty.

When he had finished, he said:

"Two weeks—three would make me as big a fool as Tommy Montgomery."

"Dat's so," said Wash, "tank de Lord, massa's hisself again."

"I ask your pardon, Hickory Maynard," said my host, "but it's a sort of disease with me."

Talking with Wash later in the evening, I found, as I expected, that his "two weeks" was a sudden happy thought.

"It came to me to say it as if it was de Lord's blessed truth," he said; "and it's one ob dem sins dat de angel blottis out; isn't dat so?"

I told him it was, of a certainty.

"Come and have a swim before dinner," said Drummond, "it will do us both good, eh?"

I assented. We scrambled down to the river, dived and swam and scrambled back again, by which time my host was the same

kindly, if eccentric, person who had received me into his trim and comfortable hut the day before.

After dinner, when he had lighted his cigar, and passed the whisky to me, he said:

"Then it's two weeks ago since you told me all about that thief and his daughter, eh? Seems to me as if it were last night. But drink is madness. The poor wretch in the play was right when he called it putting an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains. But I inherit this vice, as you swells belonging to swell families inherit the gout."

He reached out his hand for the bottle; I delayed passing it.

"Don't be afraid. I've had my bender, as they say. Don't fear for me. One glass after dinner, one before going to bed, no more for a month. It is all right."

I passed the bottle.

"If you are to be my partner, we must understand each other. Finish that yarn of yours. Do you think I forget it? Am I likely to? You are the first fellow I have talked to about my sister since I was last in England; but go ahead, I know where you were; you said the night came at last, and I said it always does, but it's the waiting for it that breaks a fellow's heart!"

CHAPTER V.

BUT A GREAT CHANGE COMES OVER "THE HUT," AND I AM GLAD I LEFT CHICAGO.

I CONTINUED the history of my life and troubles, my love and sorrow, my disappointment, my hopes, my ambition. For a long time my host did not interrupt me. He watched me with flattering interest, now and then nodding his head with approval, now and then leaving his seat and taking a turn about the room.

"She was more beautiful off the stage than on," I said, "but not much more cheerful. Somehow I found myself pitying her at home just as much as I pitied her in the play. Her smile was sweet but melancholy. She did not speak of the stage as if she liked it."

"Where did she live?" he asked, as if he were putting the question to himself, and speaking in an absorbed way.

"She lived with her father in a suite of chambers in Buckingham Street, Strand."

"Buckingham Street?" he said, thoughtfully; "don't know it. But go ahead, I am interrupting you."

"I was about to refer to the night when her father invited me home to supper."

"Yes," he said, "I remember! Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby—a swell name."

"Very," I replied.

"His own, of course?"

"Oh, yes."

"Margaret Willoughby," he said, turning the name over, as it were, in his mind. "Yes, it's a pretty name."

He was talking to himself. I paused. He passed the bottle.

"Thought you were waiting for a drink," he said. "Well, you went home with him and her to supper; yes—"

"It was a good supper," I continued, "well served, and almost luxurious. She presided over it like a queen in disguise. It occurred to me afterward that she was also like a queen in captivity. She seemed resigned, but it was as if she were acting the part of a contentment she did not feel. After supper we had a hand at cards."

"Did you not talk over supper?"

"Yes."

"What about?"

"Acting chiefly, I think."

"Not about when she was a child, and the countries they had seen in their travels?"

"No."

"Not about Mr. Willoughby's adventures, nor anything of that kind?"

"No, only commonplace talk—if I may call any conversation commonplace in which she took part. He said a game at cards was a soothing thing at night—just a quiet game. Miss Willoughby declined to play at first, but I hoped she would, I said, and after some hesitation she did. In a little while, however, he said it was time she went to bed, as she had a rehearsal in the morning. I bade her good-night. 'Just one rubber, double dummy,' he said, when she had gone, and the room was to me a blank, except for the pleasant memory she left behind. When I went home I found that

I had lost thirty shillings. I called the next day formally, and left cards on father and daughter. I was madly in love. In less than a week after first speaking to her I found an opportunity to see her alone. She seemed glad I had called, and not sorry her father was out. It was not my vanity that led me to think so; love has keen eyes. In my case it was bold, too. I confessed how devotedly I loved her, and asked her permission to propose for her to her father. I told her who I was, and said my mother should call upon her. She made no reply, but she let her hand rest quietly in mine, and when I asked for her answer there were tears in her eyes, and I kissed her."

"Quite right," said my host, not jestingly, but in an odd, serious kind of way.

"And so we were engaged," I continued; "but she asked me not to tell her father."

"Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby?" he remarked, interrogatively, and sipping his whisky.

"Yes," I said.

"I'd like to see that gentleman," he said, emptying his glass. "I kinder hated him at the start; he's a 'bad potato,' as our friend Wilkess would say. Well, youngster, go on; don't mind me; I am taking in every word you say."

"It troubled me when she asked me not to tell her father of our engagement," I said, continuing my story, "and I wondered at it all the more that I had no secrets from my mother."

"Never mind your mother," he said. "I don't care much to hear a fellow talk about his mother; stick to the girl."

"I am sticking to her," I said, smiling, "and mean to. But I can't keep my mother out of my story, and I wouldn't if I could. She is the best mother in the world."

"She may easily be that," he said, with a cynical laugh. "Well?"

"I told my mother all that had passed," I continued, "including our engagement and my determination to marry Margaret Willoughby. I asked my mother to call on her; she refused."

"Yes, of course," commented my host.

"She said she would never consent to my marriage with an actress. But I induced her to go to the theatre. After that you may be sure I persuaded her to go a step further."

"*But she did not,*" said my host, to himself.

"Yes, she did," I answered.

"Well, go ahead; don't mind what I say. I'm not much of an authority, perhaps, on mothers."

"My mother called on Miss Willoughby," I continued, "and then I suppose my friend of the tavern began to realize that I was indeed serious in my admiration of his daughter. I learned afterward that he went round and made inquiries into my financial condition and prospects. One day he met me as I was going home from the city. He invited me to have a few minutes' chat, and took me into an obscure bar. There, in a fierce whisper, he asked me what I meant in regard to his daughter. I said I should like his permission to marry her when I could afford to set up housekeeping. He said I had his permission to go and hang myself. He knew the sort of loafer I was—one of those needy swells who married actresses and lived upon their earnings. I told him that if he were not her father I would make him apologize on his knees. He said if I dared to enter his rooms again—"

"And you didn't shoot him!" exclaimed my host.

"We don't carry pistols in London; and he was her father—at least, I thought so then."

"And was he not?" asked my host, pushing his glass aside, and opening his eyes wide.

"No."

"Not her father! What relation, then?"

"Her step-father, I suppose."

"Suppose!" he said, repeating my words excitedly; "suppose!"

"Yes."

"Don't you know?"

"I don't."

"What of her mother?"

"Dead. I told you so at the outset."

"Very well, go on; sorry I interrupted you," he said, leaning back in his chair again, and relighting a cigar, which he had been chewing rather than smoking.

"Not at all," I said; "your interruptions are complimentary; they show how much my story interests you."

"That's all right," he replied. "Her name was Margaret, you said?"

"Yes."

"Did he ever call her Maggie?"

"No."

"Nor Meg?"

"No."

"Never?"

"Never."

"She was christened Margaret," he said, as if speaking to himself, "though we called her Meg, except when we called her Maggie."

"What were you saying?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing—nothing. You set me thinking of the days when I was a boy."

"Then my story no longer interests you?"

"Oh, yes, it does. Do you believe in fate?"

"Yes, in a way."

"Do you believe in predestination?"

"No."

"Do you believe that an infernal rascal gets punished in this world, as a rule?"

"No."

"I sometimes don't," he said, crossing his legs, and nursing his foot in a reflective way; "and yet if a fellow sows tares, he reaps tares; and the same book says that a man who lives by the sword shall die by the sword, which is a bad lookout for us who have snatched our inheritance by fire and sword from the original Indian possessors. It's all a muddle, I fear, as the poor fellow in the novel says—all a muddle. And yet—"

"Well, and yet what?"

"I can not help thinking that considering the diabolical wrong a certain villain has done me, my claims to vengeance are so great that he can not escape me; and that if, instead of hunting him all over the world, I had sat down in one spot and waited, he would have come along in due time to have me tear his heart out."

He rose and strode about the room, and then sat down again, nursing his foot, which he moved about in a curious way, that suggested both cunning and passion. I don't know why I thought so at the time, but I did.

"I think I believe that a wicked or brutal action brings its own punishment."

"*In this world?*"

"Yes, and in the next."

"Oh, you believe in that, do you?"

"Yes."

"And how is the punishment to come in this world without an agent?"

"The Ruler of all will see to that."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"And that a man may be called, as they say, to do the work of the Ruler of all?"

"I think so, but not to commit a crime."

"Oh, and what do you call crime? Do you define crime as the law does?"

"Yes, according to the laws that are human, and the laws that are Divine."

"Ah! and you would always call killing murder?" he asked, twirling his right foot as it hung carelessly over his left leg.

"Yes."

"Ah, we have a different law here, where self-protection is the order of the day, and where we judge as they did in the old days before professional lawyers and paid judges took up the reins between them. Now, supposing I go down to the 'Castle,' even if I am ever so drunk, insult that woman there, outrage the hospitality of her husband, although he is of no account as some would say, do you know what the boys would do to me? Shoot me like a dog! And serve me right! Do you think it is the innate virtue of man that protects a woman right through these regions beyond the pale of law? No; sometimes it is the certainty of the death that follows outrage that makes gentlemen of the entire gang. No, my boy, killing is no murder in many a case. But enough of that; did you say this Willoughby was tall, polite, sandy, with a grand sort of air, conceited, cunning, with light eyes, a mouth like a vise, eh?"

"He is tall," I answered, "his hair is a light red, he has a mustache and imperial of the same color, his eyes are a bluish gray, his manner is cold and haughty—a calculating manner—and his mouth, what you can see of it underneath his mustache, is somewhat coarse."

"Not thin lips?"

"I think not. I should say a rather coarse, ill-shaped mouth."

"Ah, indeed," commented my host; "but a haughty manner?"

"An insolent manner would perhaps be a more truthful description," I said.

"Yes, so it would," remarked my host, as if he had in his mind the picture I had drawn of Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby.

"A harsh voice," I continued, "and with an affected, hesitating manner of speaking."

"I don't remember that, yet you seem to recall a face and a man I hate. Would you call that manner of his a distinguished manner —in the common acceptation of that ambiguous phrase?"

"No; insolent, impertinent—the manner of a snob, not the harmless snob, but the snob who may have worn a gown at Oxford and disgraced it—a malicious snob!"

"You hate him!" exclaimed my host, with a certain malignant tone of satisfaction in his voice.

"I do not love him," I replied.

"No, who could?" he remarked; "and yet she—but we will not speak of that. And after all this news of yours, as I interpret it, is too good to be true. I must be mad to think that such an accident as your meeting Wilkess could bring you here with the clew I am forever seeking. No, no; Washy has not doused the drink out of me; and I'm dreaming—a 'whisky dream' as Lady Ann would call it. Yet many a thing has been brought about by accident; many a discovery has been made by a fluke. Is it not so?"

"Yes," I said; "the mines that have enriched San Francisco, for instance."

"And the silver of this region," he replied. "The first pioneers sought gold, didn't find it, and walked all over the silver they are now minting into currency. That is so. Did Miss Willoughby ever—"

He went to the doorway as if to collect his thoughts.

"I fear I have started painful memories; let us not talk any more about my petty hopes and fears."

"Did Miss Willoughby ever speak of her mother?" he asked, not heeding my remark.

"Oh, yes; several times. But it always struck me that she did so in a constrained manner; on account of her being dead, I always concluded."

"Did she speak of any other relation?"

"She said she had no relation in the world. She had a brother *when she was a little girl*, but he was long since dead."

"But her mother? What did she say about her mother?"

"Nothing that I remember in particular at the time I am telling you of; but just before we parted in London she made a strange and somewhat sad communication to me. But you are confusing me a little. Let me finish, and then ask me any further questions afterward. The interest you take in my affairs makes me anxious to tell you all. It is a pleasure to me to unburden myself to you, since you take in me the interest of a friend."

"How long have we known each other?" he asked, laying his hand on mine.

"About twenty-four hours," I replied.

"It seems years. Go on with your story. Something tells me that I have a place in it. I may be wrong, stupidly wrong. My fancies may only be whisky after all; but go on, I won't put you out any more."

"I found it difficult," I continued, "to meet her after that; but my press friend managed it for me. He was a critic on one of the journals, and had not only the influence that belongs to a clever pen, but the influence that belongs to cultivated and educated manners, the influence that belongs to a gentleman. He brought her to my mother's house at Doughty Street, for I had confessed all to my mother, who, though at the outset she was inclined to oppose my wishes, consented to see the girl and give me her candid opinion of her and my desire that she should one day be my wife. My mother fell in love with her almost at once. That was a great comfort to me. I had a scheme for making a fortune. A young fellow in our office had gone out to America. Soon after his arrival there, he gave up the business about which he went out, and joined some men who were going to the gold diggings. He wrote and invited me to come out. Before I had time to answer him I received another letter, saying that if I would come he would help me with money and advice; he was part owner of a profitable claim, and hoped to bring home twenty thousand pounds. I made a proposition to Margaret and to my mother. I would go out, I said, and if they would give me two years I would come back and marry. Margaret gave me at once her pledge to wait; and also, if anything happened which should give her the need of a home, she would accept the shelter of my mother's house. But she said I must have her father's consent. She knew how he had insulted me; nevertheless, I must put up with that for her sake; she had special reasons

for asking it. We were alone when she said this, alone in the little dining-room at Doughty Street. I shall never forget that pleasant time. It seems like a dream, with a strange romance in it. We sat together; her hand rested in mine, and we talked of the days when I should return home, and it would not be necessary for her to act any more, but that we would live a quiet, peaceful, happy life."

"But her father, this Willoughby," interrupted my host once more, "said she liked acting."

"That was not true," I answered. "He forced her upon the stage. He made that a means of courting the patronage and society of a certain class of fifth-rate nobility. He received her salary and lived by his wits. He accepted questionable invitations for her, and she promised that if necessary she would leave him, declare he was not her father, and seek my mother's protection. But, somehow, he exercised a peculiar fascination over her, and she was only brave when he was not present."

"You shouldn't have left her, by heaven you shouldn't!" said my host. "But go on to the end, I said I would not interrupt you."

"That is the end, I fear, unless you want an account of my failures on this side of the Atlantic. They began when I landed in New York, with news of the bankruptcy and death of the fellow-clerk who had induced me to come out."

"Don't mind him—he is all right. When a fellow's dead there is no more to be said; he is not to be pitied, for he is at rest; it is those whom he leaves behind who suffer; they only are entitled to pity. Let us keep to Doughty Street for a while longer. Did she not say anything about the terms on which they lived, her mother and this man—this step-father?"

"I gathered that they were not happy together, and that they led a mysterious kind of life, going from place to place, and meeting curious people. Once they spent several months in Vienna. I don't know much about such things, but I would not be surprised if Willoughby was at that time employed as a Russian spy. The Czar, I know, has all kinds of people at work for him in Europe. One of my brothers is in the diplomatic service."

"But Russia pays well, eh?"

"I suppose so."

"Yet this Willoughby is evidently hard-up, or was when you *last saw him?*"

"He may have been kicked out of the Russian service," I suggested.

"Would he not then have sold himself to some other government, or to the police?"

"He's a gambler," I said; "and even cheats, I observe, have their ups and downs."

"That's true," he said; "and Margaret is very pretty?"

"Yes," I said; "not the mere prettiness of pretty features, but the prettiness, the beauty, that belongs to a kind heart; the sweetness that comes from pure thoughts, in spite of foul surroundings; the sweetness of a rose blooming among nettles; a flower of rare color and perfume, that makes a pure world of its own, however much it may be crowded with tares. Have you not seen such in a neglected garden?"

"Yes, yes," he answered; "in a neglected garden."

Then, rising again from his chair, he walked about the room, went to the door and opened it for a moment, the rain beating in upon him. There was a strange light in his eyes as he turned toward me when he closed the door, and a more or less elevated expression in his face.

"For the rain it raineth every day," he said, standing by the table and looking at me. "Did you ever hear that other song beginning 'I had a flower within my garden growing'? A poor, hard-up wretch, a broken-down fellow, in Denver, sung it outside a bar-room one evening, and set me thinking of a garden I once knew, with a lovely woman and a happy father and two little children in it, and roses and sunshine and a dear friend; and, by Heaven! I was not sober for two weeks afterward. A wolf in sheep's clothing came into that garden—. But there, go on, old chap, let us get back to that curse of the world, Fitzherbert Willoughby."

He sat down again in an attitude of attention, but with a face that had, it seemed to me, suddenly lost its color.

"Go on, partner, I am listening," he said; "go on."

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

"BUT you are not drinking," I said, "and your cigar is out."

"That's all right, my friend. I came across his track twice, only twice, once in Paris, once in San Francisco; on those two occasions I had a strange heating here" (laying his hand on his breast), "and here" (pressing his hand upon his forehead). "I had the same sensation when I led my men into my first fight with the Indians; the same when I struck my pick into the vein of ore that feeds the Revenge Mine; and I feel it now, I feel it now."

"Overexcitement," I said.

"Maybe," he replied. "I thought it might be drink—it isn't. It is a token of success, a forecast that nature has a sign for. It is one of those mysterious signals that you only get to understand by being alone in the world—alone and a brooder; alone and a believer in omens; alone and a student of nature. Now, Hickory Maynard, let us get to the end of this long lane. I said you ought not to have left her with that beast. Perhaps I was wrong."

"It was only at the last moment that I learned all: when my trunks were packed; when my passage was taken, and it seemed as if there was nothing else to be done; then I think she told me all to nerve my arm, and make it strong."

"She would know best, God bless her!" said Dick; "no doubt she would. But I wouldn't have left her had I been you."

"Don't say that, friend. I would have only been too glad to stay by her side."

"What did she say at last, then, about her mother?"

"I went to her father, and, in spite of his rudeness, I told him I had a prospect of wealth, that I was going abroad for two years, and that I wanted his permission to correspond with his daughter with a view to marriage at the end of that time, should my financial position be satisfactory to him. 'I give my consent,' he said, in his pompous way, 'young sir, I give my consent—'"

"Go on; imitate him—imitate him!" exclaimed Dick. "Is that how he talked?"

"*Yes, something* like it," I said.

"By heaven! you have no idea how you interest me—what hopes you fill me with. Go on; go on."

"On this condition, sir; that there is nothing so binding between you that shall, ah, prevent my engaging her hand to another in the mean time; if you succeed in, ah, your views, and make a fortune, which I shall take leave to doubt, for I know something of the land of the West, sir, as the song has it, and don't think much of it, ah, no, sir; but do your best. You have letters, you say, important letters; well, I wish you success, and I am sure we understand each other. You are free, Miss Willoughby is free, I am free."

"And yet you left her!" my host exclaimed again.

"I had no alternative. You seem to doubt my love; you don't doubt my courage. The greatest act of heroism I ever committed was in leaving her," I said.

"And that is how he talked, eh? Lofty, was he? And he had been on this side, had he?"

"He led me to believe so."

"And she—had she?"

"I suppose not, or she would have said so."

"Ah, I dare say I am wrong altogether. She said something very important the day you parted?"

"Yes."

"What was it? Did she ever talk of the time when she was very little, before that brother died?"

"No."

"Not how they played together, and how they were separated?"

"No."

"God have mercy on me! I shall go mad!" he exclaimed.

"I beg your pardon," I said. "I am distressing you."

"No, no; you can't see where my wild dream is carrying me. Did she say nothing more—nothing about me?"

"About you!" I exclaimed.

"No, how could she?" he said; and I feared I was about to have an experience of that other phase of my host's character, which was described by Lady Ann—a crank when sober—for I had had evidence of the possibility of his fiendishness when drunk.

"Of course not," he said, sitting down again and composing himself; "but do you mind telling me all about that last interview, because with that throbbing of my heart I told you of has come into

the sympathetic throbbing of my head the conviction that I know Miss Willoughby and her so-called father."

"Is it possible?" I said.

"Perhaps," he replied; "for, as we have already both admitted, everything is possible to him who waits."

He was very calm, and had lighted another cigar, so I finished my story; and it was time, seeing that the cuckoo clock in Wash's kitchen cooed the hour of twelve.

"The day we parted she said—shall I tell you every word? We were standing in the room where I first saw her; he had consented to our leave-taking. 'You have no reason to fear I shall not be true and faithful, no matter what he says. For my sake you have humbled yourself to him, and I am glad you have done so, for I may now sometimes mention your name. Moreover, if you should come back rich, he will keep his word. If you should come back poorer than you are now, that will make no difference to my plighted troth; always supposing, dear, that you continue in the same mind.'

"I could only say, 'My darling,' for my heart was too full.

"'And don't be afraid,' she continued, 'that he will coerce me to do anything you might object to. He is not my father, and, if it becomes necessary, I will leave him and declare it. When my mother died, she told me that her husband and my father died through an accident when I was a child; that his name is not Willoughby; that he is not a good man. She was about, I think, to tell me my father's name and his, but her strength failed her, and she never spoke again. So you see,' said my poor little sweetheart, 'if you marry me you will marry an orphan, and a nameless one, for God knows who I am, I do not.'"

"Lord help her!" exclaimed Dick Drummond, "no. But I do!"

"You?"

"Yes, I," he said. "Give me your hand, Hickory Maynard; you shall not only be my partner, you shall be my brother, You are engaged to my sister!"

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE SHADOW OF A CRIME.

"I SHALL sleep to-night, partner—brother that is to be," said my host; "sleep as I have not slept since I was a boy."

He paced the room—not hurriedly, but in a quiet, contented way—and talked as he walked.

"I feel like a man who has been making a long journey, and who, having the goal well in sight, goes to bed, knowing that he can reach it comfortably before noon the next day. When a man has lived alone for years, with one idea, one desire in his mind, he gradually grows out of sympathy with the world, except in so far as it can help him in his enterprise, whatever it may be. Sometimes I have wondered whether I should end my life in a workhouse or a jail, or on the gallows. Don't be afraid. You look anxious; you are concerned for me, my boy."

"I am, yes, hearing you talk so wildly."

"I does me good that you feel so; it gives me a foretaste of the pleasure I count upon in making you and her happy—my sister Maggie, my brother Hickory. You are religious, are you not? I heard you praying last night, and I can tell you are religious by the way Washington has taken to you."

"I always pray when I go to bed," I said. "It is a habit with me, as much as a religious exercise."

"But you believe—as they say, you have faith?"

"I hope so."

"I try to sometimes," he said, pausing to look down upon me, for I sat quietly in my chair while he paced the room; "but I always

feel as if that old Satan who warred with Heaven has still a hand in the government; as if, like Homer, the King nodded and let Satan get his hand in again; as if the King gave His old foe a respite now and then—unchained him and let him have his fling; otherwise, how can you account for the infernal things that happen? Do you really believe with Pope that Heaven

"'Sees with equal eyes, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall?'"

"Yes," I said; "but, at the same time, when you quote these lines, you should remember the context which claims that 'Heaven, from all creatures, hides the Book of Fate, all but the page prescribed their present state.' Otherwise, as he says—for I remember the passage to which you refer—

"'Who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.'"

"That is so; but it proves nothing. To my mind, it would be a fairer contract between Heaven and man if we had some sort of agreement and understanding as to what we had to carry, what to do, what to suffer in this life. We come here without choice, our sanction is not asked, we suffer or are happy, we are poor or rich, ignorant or learned; we are sickly or strong, mad or sane, no questions asked; and we become meet for Heaven or hell, just the same, without a 'by-your-leave,' or what not. And yet a sparrow does not fall without sanction, you say; I can't take it in, for the life of me. And I have tried, too—tried hard and prayed."

"You are touching upon great problems," I said, "that I make it a point not to discuss. For my part, I accept my life for what it is worth, and I do not quarrel with its surroundings, though to me they have been hard and sour. I have faith in things coming right. I think it is good for men to be tried by adversity, to go through the fire, to remember how much more the Redeemer of the world suffered than anything they can suffer. I accept the conflict, and the corner of the great battle of life in which it is my lot to fight, and I go on trusting and hoping, and believing that good must come out of bad at last—that there is sunshine behind the cloud; and that if this is not so here on earth, the reward will come in Heaven."

"*Happy fellow!* happy fellow!" my host exclaimed. "And you

believe in Heaven, in the life to come, with its everlasting sunshine and its languid bliss?"

"Yes, I do; this life would be a very poor business without such a hope, such a belief."

"Oh, I don't know that; it all depends who your father is, where you are born, and under what circumstances. Take the son of a wealthy English peer, with a splendid record, a long rent-roll, a well-balanced mind, a strong constitution, a noble ambition, a happy marriage; the heaven on earth which he enjoys is a finer thing than the paradise of the religionists, with its everlasting praising of the King, and its nullity of ambition. But why should my neighbor, this wealthy, well-bred son of a peer, be born to all this real, tangible bliss, while another comes into the world to an inheritance of misery, of hell upon earth—a faithless mother, a drunken father, and a mission of vengeance?"

"Your illustrations refute your negative belief—that is, if you really do think this life is its be-all and end-all—unless there were a future, then, indeed, the two instances you mention would be an outrage upon justice. But the Divine Ruler gives to each here below his responsibility, his talent, and in making up their accounts at last, much more will be expected of that peer's son than of him whose father was a drunkard, whose mother was untrue."

"Yes, that is the religion of the poor, invented by the rich, that they may keep down the poor with sophistry and promises of the palaces in Heaven which they can never hope to have on earth."

"But Christ promised more to the poor than to the rich," I said.

"He knew how wretched they are, and administered to them accordingly. But do not let me shake your faith, especially at the moment when I have something more than a glimmering of Heaven's recognition of the eternal fitness of things. It may be that the recording angel who presides over the book of Fate has in the course of His business come to my name and his (it can not be that our mutual aliases have disguised us from Him) and to hers; it may be that His stern eye has rested on me in these mountains that have no sunny Pisgah at their base; it may be that He has sent you here, for your own sake and mine, as a reward for your faith, and as the medium of a long delayed action; for it can not be that He has forgotten what is due to that fiend in human shape whom I have

so long prayed to meet again, and who is destined to reap as he has sown."

"Ah, Dick Drummond, my dear friend, I wish you could think only of the good, the happiness there may be in this meeting of ours, without thinking of the bad. I don't profess to be religious by a long way; I have done things which truly pious people would condemn severely."

"But is not life from your standpoint," he said, with a sarcastic smile, "speculating in futures? Thinking of your sins, you have no doubt got Chicago in your mind."

"Yes," I said, and I could not help smiling at my host's adaptation of a leading enterprise in a great city.

"Ah, it's no good talking," he said, "about what neither of us know anything; I am willing to believe that Fate has once more remembered me and my mission; let us go to bed. Sleep is the most merciful invention—dreamless sleep. Good-night, old fellow—good-night, I hope this is not all a dream, eh?"

"I could well-nigh believe it is," I said.

"Go to bed, and pray it into reality," he replied. "I am half inclined to believe that the miracle is of your work, if it be a miracle. Shake hands."

He took my hand with a strong grip. His eyes were very bright, though his face had a calm expression; the anxious, watchful look it had worn at first had gone out of it. He was like a man who had solved a long investigated problem; he seemed to rest upon it, but only for the time; as if there were achievements to follow, as if the present end were only an outpost conquered, and the citadel lay beyond.

"I hope you'll never regret meeting me," he said.

"I am sure I shall not."

"Don't be too sure."

"I never was more sure about anything."

"We have not done with each other yet."

"I hope not."

"Fate brought you here."

"For a good purpose," I said.

"Yes, no doubt; Fate works in mysterious ways."

"For Fate read God," I said.

"Call it what you like, Hickory," he replied, solemnly; "men call *it by all kinds of names.* I want you to make me a promise."

"What is it?"

"A promise at present," he said; "later I may ask you to make it a vow."

"Yes?" I said, with an inquiring look into his calm face.

"May!" he said, "I shall, of course—a solemn vow, not to be broken, sworn as if on the Book in a Court of Justice. Will you do it?"

"If it is a right thing to do," I said.

"Yes, of course," he replied; "it will depend upon what you may consider right; but I will strengthen your judgment, with interest, with an all-powerful interest—your own personal happiness."

"Ah, my friend, I fear you have made a low estimate of me. There are great things a man may do for nothing, there are little things a man's highest personal interest can not bribe him to do."

"I shall bribe you, nevertheless," said Dick, with a smile, as he rose and laid his hand upon my shoulder, "I shall bribe you."

"Indeed," I said, looking up at him.

"Yes, and you will be unable to resist me. I shall buy that vow you will make to me."

"Shall you?" I said: "well, we shall see. I would do a great deal for you, Dick Drummond; you have been very good to me; you have excited in me a strange interest in you, and touched deep chords of friendship. I like you very much indeed, old chap, and I am sure you will never ask me to do anything that is not honorable and that one man may not ask from another. When you talk of a bribe you are using a figure of speech, are you not?"

"I don't know," he answered, pacing the room, and then facing me at the other end of the table; "we will settle that later. I think you are bound to do what I ask; I believe you are here for a purpose; that—But we will talk more of this in due time. You only know me as Dick Drummond, and you only know my sister as Margaret Willoughby."

"That is all I do know," I said.

"But what has passed between us in our secret—the secret of this hut; when you write home to her, or to your mother, or to anybody, you will not mention in any way, by hint, or suggestion, or directly, that Margaret Willoughby is my sister."

"But some day I may?" I answered.

"Never, unless with my consent," he said, solemnly, my hand in his. "*Have I your promise*, your word of honor?"

"You have."

"That's enough—good-night."

He might have said morning, for old Wash's cuckoo clock murmured three when I blew out my candle and the moonlight streamed into my chamber.

CHAPTER II.

ON A SEA OF DOUBT AND WONDER.

I COULD not sleep. In spite of the difference of time, I tried to think the moon was shining on Doughty Street in London, and on Buckingham Street, Strand. I followed its calm beams down into the quiet corner of the great city, where Margaret was sleeping, close by the shadows of the old Water Gate near the Thames. I saw the mighty stream of life flow along the Strand, and fancied Buckingham Street a quiet backwater with the moon shining upon it.

Then I wandered away in my fancy to the semi-fashionable quarter of Mecklenburgh Square, with its comfortable, solid houses, and their old-world associations; and I saw the porter opening the gates that lead into Doughty Street, to admit a cab in which I was chafing against the delay that kept me from my mother's arms.

Who could know so well as I the sleepless nights she had passed, thinking of me? My heart ached at the thought of her tender solicitude for my welfare. I pictured her dear, loving face, with its mild eyes looking down upon me. I seemed to feel her lips pressing my forehead as they had done when I was a boy, and pretended to be asleep that she might go to bed the happier for thinking I slept.

Then I saw Margaret at the theatre, and followed her with tears in my eyes through the sorrowful story of the play; and then I started up, broader awake than ever, to shudder at the man who called himself her father.

I got up, relighted the candle, drew the curtain across my window to shut out the moon, took from my trunk a packet of letters, and read several of them over and over again.

"*Think of me only* as a happy girl, my dear Hickory," she wrote

to me at New York. That was when I was half-starved for want food, and hopeless for want of any prospect of work.

"My dearest boy, come home if you are not well; come home if your prospects are not good; come home under any circumstances, for I am very, very sad without you," wrote my mother.

And, oh! how I wished I dared go home then. But how could I, empty-handed—nothing done? "Whatever troubles I may have are as nought compared to the knowledge that I have your love," wrote Margaret to Chicago.

"You are brave as you are good, my dear Hickory," wrote my mother, "and God will take care of you; pray to Him always, and pray for me. Your sweetheart is well; I went to see her play a new part at the Adelphi, and she acted it charmingly."

To think of my mother not only accepting an actress as her prospective daughter, but going to the theatre to see her! Could I desire any further proof of her love for me? What a story I should have to tell her of my wanderings, and of my discovery of Dick!

Then I began to think of the promise he had exacted from me, and to wonder whether he meant to keep always in that background of non-identity which he had indicated.

The more I thought, the more puzzled I became and the more strange did it seem to me that, after all my profitless adventures, I should be here comfortably housed with a man who claimed to be my Margaret's brother, and who, being rich, declared that I should be his partner. Was it all a dream? I asked myself, as he had asked.

I put away my letters and examined my host's bookshelf.

There were only a few volumes upon it. They had all been carefully read, judging by their dog's-eared condition. Pope's "Essay on Man," "Hamlet," "The Works of Thomas Paine," "Selections from Fénélon," "Shelley's Works," "The Bible," "Practical Mining," "Fate: an Essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson," "Evidences of Insanity," "The Science of War," and the first volume of "The Odes of Horace," in their original Latin text.

These were his books. The first I opened was the last-mentioned volume. I found it marked, and here and there translations of the text written on the margin. One of the stanzas at the close of the volume was marked with extra lines, the translation written out in red ink. This was the text:

"Solvat phaselum sæpe Diespiter
Neglectus incesto addit integrum:
Raro antecedentem scelestum,
Desernit pede pœna claudo."

And this the translation:—

"When Jove in anger strikes the blow,
Oft with the bad the righteous bleed;
Yet with sure steps, though lame and slow,
Vengeance o'ertakes the trembling villain's speed."

Memories of my somewhat fruitless classic studies at Oxford thus aroused at sight of Horace sent me to Fénélon. I opened the volume at a passage marked this time with a pencil, in the dialogues of the dead, where Gryllus answered the question of Ulysses—"And are you senseless and brutish enough to despise wisdom, which makes men almost equal to the gods?" The following portions of the answer were marked: "Of what advantage is that much boasted wisdom? All the use man makes of it is to gratify his passion. Talk not of man; he is the most irrational of animals. Without flattering myself, a hog is a clever creature; he does not coin false money, nor does he draw false contracts; he never forswears himself, undertakes no unjust and bloody conquests, is ingenuous without malice, and spends his life in eating and sleeping. Far better for the world if we all imitated his example. Talk not to me of reason, for man is filled with folly; and one had better be a hog than a man having wisdom who only uses it for brutish wickedness."

Sad as this black-and-white evidence of my host's misanthropy made me, I could not help thinking that if I questioned him on this extract from Fénélon, he might say he had marked it as a tribute to Chicago; for he had a grim humor, behind which he hid some great purpose, for good or bad.

One may often arrive at a pretty fair estimate of a man's character by a study of the books he reads, especially when his library is a small one.

I turned to the great American sage, and found Emerson marked as follows: "When the gods in the Norse heaven were unable to bind the Fenn's Wolf with steel or with weight of mountains—the one he snapped and the other he spurned with his heel—they put round his foot a limp band, softer than silk or cobweb, and this held him; the more he spurned it, the stiffer it drew. So soft and *so staunch is the ring* of Fate. Neither brandy, nor nectar, nor

sulphuric ether, nor hell fire, nor ichor, nor poetry, nor genius, can get rid of this limp band. For if we give it the high sense in which the poets use it, even thought itself is not above Fate."

Here the marking ended, and it occurred to me to make note of the three lines that followed, since the student seemed to be fortifying himself with authorities: "That (Fate), too, must act according to eternal laws, and all that is willful and fantastic in it is in opposition to its fundamental essence."

"Hamlet" was thumbed, and seared throughout with pen and pencil. Every line that stabbed the reputation of woman, each moral dagger spoken by the Prince to his mother, all the lines that were heavy with Hamlet's mission of revenge, every curse he flung at his uncle, all these passages were marked, as if the reader felt his feet deep in Hamlet's shoes, or felt so keenly for his hero that he wished to be there; or, what was more like, compared his own real wrongs and hardships with those of the fictitious sufferer. Wherever the murder of Hamlet's father was mentioned, there the reader had made the deepest marks. "I, the son of a dear father murdered," for instance, and "the serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown."

As I sat with "Hamlet" in my hand, thinking how strange it was to find in the "Boss of Drummond's Gulch" a student of Horace and Shakespeare, and Tom Paine and Fénélon; and how much stranger still to find in that man not only the clew to the mystery of Margaret Willoughby, but her very brother, my eyes rested upon a volume that had escaped me; it was lying on a small box upon another shelf; I noticed it now because it was better bound than most of the others. It turned out to be a special favorite of mine —an English translation of Alphonse Karr's "Tour round my Garden." It was marked like the rest, but not with vicious emphasis as they seemed to be. They were old marks, too, most of them, and showed an appreciation of the poetry of the volume, and its wonderful revelations of natural phenomena.

The first passage I came upon was a challenge to me, who had been wondering at the strangeness of my coming here, the lost link in a mysterious chain of human suffering and sorrow, perhaps to be the first link in a continuing chain of love and joy.

"I burn, my friend, to know what account you will oppose to this, *you who have* traveled so far; I defy you even to venture a

falsehood so extraordinary as this truth which I have just exhibited to you."

Then I came upon this passage marked, evidently long ago, but with an apparently recent comment written in the margin. This was the text: "A few minutes afterward a ray of sunshine dissipated the clouds; I believed that I had been heard, and I thanked God as earnestly as I had prayed." The prayer had been "that the rain might cease." This was the comment: "But supposing somebody else wanted quite as badly the refreshing blessing of the rain?"

The same trains of thoughts running through the reader's mind always—unbelief, except in a vicious and fantastic Fate; a sense of deep, bitter injury, a lifelong sense of wrong, a lifelong thirst for vengeance.

"Who is he, then," I asked myself, "that broods over a blasted childhood, an embittered youth, and courts a miserable old age? Who is he that calls himself my love's brother, who asks me to be his partner, claims me as his brother that is to be? Who is he, this man with a strange method in his madness, that pledges me to keep his secret, pledges me before I know what his secret is? Am I right to let the prospect of wealth influence me so far?"

I bethought me of Hamlet as I questioned myself and his doubt of the ghost. Might not his influence be evil? Did he hope to use me as his tool in some nefarious scheme? Was he mad? They said so in the camp. That he was a brute when in his cups I had ample proof. Did he seek to obtain some special influence over me by claiming relationship with Margaret?

Or was Fate drifting me into some horrible complication?

While my thoughts were tossed on a sea of doubt and wonder, the book in my hand slipped open at the half-title page, upon which there was writing. I looked at it in a mechanical kind of way, and read:

"*For Remembrance.*

"TO GEORGE NEWBOLDE—this May-day Gift. From his friend and pastor,

"DIGBY OLIPHANT.

"*Sandwich, May 1, 18—.*"

"The vicar!" I said to myself, "George Newbolde—Sandwich! Can it be? Is this the artist's son then who seeks to avenge his *father's honor*, his father's death? Great Heavens! is this my

Maggie's brother? And Fitzherbert Willoughby, is he the villain who desolated the old home at Sandwich? And am I selected by Providence, or by Fate, to be the means of retribution, the instrument of vengeance, or the messenger of peace and good will?"

"Why, golly! Massa Maynard, yo'se neber been to bed, I declar!" exclaimed a voice at the door; "why, yo' is a scholar to be settin' a-readin' all de bressed night. And de Boss, him sleep as if dere was no resurrection—neber see a pusson sleep no faster dan he is. Has yo' been readin' dat same book all de night? Den yo' must have found it bery interesting."

"I have, Washy," I said. "I never read anything that has interested me so much in all my life as something I have read in this book."

"Is dat so?"

"It is so, indeed."

CHAPTER III.

WHICH PROVES THE TRUTH OF THE ADAGE THAT YOU GO FROM HOME TO HEAR NEWS.

WE both regarded each other, Dick Drummond and I, that day from a new and deeply interesting standpoint.

He had discovered to me the secret of Margaret Willoughby's parentage. I had stumbled upon the ambition of his career. The pastoral, gentle life developed in "A Tour round my Garden" was a strange background for the tragic story of Sandwich, and its vow of vengeance registered by the boy of the old manse.

And yet upon the fly-leaf of this volume was inscribed in those few words of the vicar the leading points of my host's career and mission.

I resolved to keep this discovery to myself for a time, since the "Boss of Drummond's Gulch" had promised to give me a sketch of his life and ambition. I thought it best to see how it tallied with the brief story of the vicar. Not that I mistrusted my host. I did not; but it came into my mind to act as I say, and I do not regret it, seeing that the hero of the morning's narrative gave *me details of his* mother's flight, his father's death, and his

own remarkable adventures which he would probably not otherwise have mentioned.

It troubles me sometimes, when I am putting these chronicles together, the reflection that the heroine of this history, Margaret Willoughby, will only learn the true story of her life when my narrative is published. It is possible she may never see these pages. If she becomes possessed of the clew to her own story, she may pick it up concurrently with the discovery of it by the reader hereof. Need I say that I thought of her during these eventful days at Drummond's Gulch?

My host slept until nearly midday. Wash peeped in at the door many times, fearing he must be dead.

"Neber slep so much afore," he said.

"And perhaps never will again," said Dick, himself awakening while Wash was speaking, "until he sleeps for good."

"You have, indeed, had a rare spell of it this time," I said, as he huddled on an old jacket and trousers.

"Yes," he replied, "but I am very wide awake now—I have been dreaming ugly dreams for years and years; and now I have left them behind forever. Have a smoke while I bathe."

I walked with him to the edge of the cliffs, and then sat down while he worked his way along a natural path to the river. It was a glorious day. The air was full of a healthy perfume of pines and flowers. The distant mountains appeared to be but a mile or two away instead of fifty. An eagle or some other great wild bird sailed in the blue above me, and a cluster of butterflies were hovering over the bush at my feet. The scene was beautiful beyond description, and silent as beautiful. I smoked and dreamed. Should I presently awake?

I could not help wondering why people crowd and jostle each other in great cities, when there are thousands of miles of paradise unoccupied. I built in fancy a home for Margaret and my mother on the other side of the river, and saw George's hut changed into a solid stone house in a garden; and in short took them all into my pleasant dream and dreamed it out to the end; but the end was a mystery. Who can finish this dream of life and death to his own satisfaction?

Presently I could see Dick Drummond breasting the torrent or *floating with it*, and I found myself wishing that in this world we *could all float with* the stream and never have to turn and face it

and fight it, some of us to go down under the roar and rush of i some to conquer it and find a haven of quiet and learned leisure.

"You are in a thoughtful mood this morning," said Dick, whe he had climbed the steep and once more stood by my side.

"Yes, everything is so peaceful, there seems a general invitatio to be reflective."

"That is how you feel."

"It is."

"Then you are not physically hungry?"

"No."

"Intellectually?"

"No."

"Enjoying your weed, you are experiencing the sensation of true smoker—don't want to be disturbed. But we must not disap point Washy. Come along. Fried chicken for breakfast, Virgini fashion, Washy's best dish. You should have had a swim."

"Didn't feel like it this morning," I said.

"After breakfast we'll have a long lazy jaw, if you like, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you shall try a new cigar, a new brand which Lady An has sent up from the Gulch, 'real grit,' as they say. Lady Ann wonder what will become of her when I leave the Gulch."

"Do you think of leaving?"

"Some day," he said; "to-morrow, perhaps."

"You are joking."

"Do I joke much?"

"No, on reflection I don't think you do; let us eat."

It was a fine breakfast considering how far we were from civiliza tion. Grilled sardines, fried chicken, buckwheat cakes, and coffe worthy of the best London club. And Washy waited as well as h cooked. A good negro is the greatest of all treasures as a servant Born to serve, when he is proud of his work, capable and we treated, he is the best and truest servant in the world.

"Now, Washy, where are the new cigars?"

"'Ere de are, sah; and Lady Ann, she says his lordship find dem de best he hab eber smoked."

"That's all right; leave the coffee, Washy."

"Yes, sah."

"Now, Mr. Thoughtful, make yourself comfortable, and we' converse," *said Dick.*

He seemed like a new man this morning: held his head erect; the old settled, anxious expression had gone out of his eyes; his voice even had improved; there was more of the gentleman and less of the "Boss of Drummond's Gulch" in his manner.

"Did you ever come across this book?" asked my host, handing me Hollis Read's "Hand of God in History."

"No."

"I read all sides, you see."

"And yet stand only by one."

"You mean I am an unbeliever?"

"Not quite."

"Well, I am not a Christian in the full meaning of the term any way—and not by a great deal."

"What do you believe?"

"Well, in evolution, as Darwin described it."

"Oh, then, we begin as tadpoles, and end as food for worms?"

"Yes, pretty much like that. But for all that I read the other side, I tell you, and am open to conviction."

"As voters at elections are," I said.

"You mean that I am open to a bribe. Well, to a certain extent, yes—that is, I want what I have prayed for. I want justice, the punishment of vice. I used to pray for it. Lately I have been content to wait, to bide my time."

"You have odd notions about prayer."

"Perhaps; my leading idea concerning prayer is that it braces one up to try and be equal to or worthy of what one asks for. But last night I began to think that Read may be right. He traces every event of historical importance to the hand of God. 'Events, apparently contradictory, often,' he says, 'stand in the relation of cause and effect: a Pharaoh and a Nebuchadnezzar, an Alexander and a Nero, a Domitian and a Borgia, Henry VIII and Napoleon, men world-renowned, yet oftentimes prodigies of wickedness, are in every age made the instruments and the agents to work out the scheme of God's operations.'"

"They are striking illustrations of His belief, those you have named," I said.

"Well, I think so too, and I am piecing out my case as one that may come into that category. Since the outrage of a fiend with the soul of a Nero or a Tarquin is practically the cause of my being *here, my wrongs* are the seeds from which a new world will grow

up: a new world that will give work and food to thousands who, but for the discoveries on this spot, might have starved; nay, one might carry the theory of possible good much farther. And so I am trying to fit your arrival here as part of the scheme of foresight; you come when the foundation of this new world beyond the Rockies is laid, to point the way to some compensation for miseries undeserved, in the rescue of my sister from captivity, and you come as the messenger who hands to the executioner the warrant of death. Thus the wronged are avenged; and so we follow out the programme of the author and philosopher."

"Ah, Dick Drummond," I said, "you are trying to justify to your conscience the committal of a crime. The devil, you know, can quote scripture for his purpose."

"I was not quoting scripture," he replied, turning toward me his steadfast eyes, and smiling satirically; "poor old Read is not scripture; Darwin is perhaps better than either, but that is neither here nor there, and I don't wish to hurt your orthodox feelings."

"What good will it do to your sister, or to any one, if you kill that man?"

"That beast, you mean; you would leave him to repent and be saved, for he could, you know, at the last moment; and what good would that do to those whose lives he has blasted—to the dear good fellow whom he murdered, eh? If I go to Heaven I don't propose to have him there. Listen, Maynard, and I'll tell you my story; until you have heard it you can not properly understand my sentiments or opinions. Moreover, from this day, with your permission, you are my partner in the Gulch property, and with my permission, my sister shall be your partner in love and marriage. But on conditions, mark you, on conditions."

"What are the conditions, Dick?"

"All in good time; they will not be onerous; one condition may trouble you a little, but it will be in the interest of her happiness, and an act of self-denial on my part, so great that you can not deny me, unless I am mistaken in your character. We shall see."

"Proceed, my friend, I hope I appreciate your kindly motives, and that I am not ungrateful for the generous reception you gave me, a stranger, and a debtor for the little money I brought into the camp."

"Oh, that's nothing," he said; "you had claims on me that I could *not have shirked had* I been a brute; Wilkess has the right

of a true friend to command me, hand, heart, and pocket. But you want to know how I come to be Maggie's brother, why I hate that man who is your enemy and hers, how she and I come to be separated, and why it is we have not seen each other since we were children, and that she is under the impression I am dead. I recall the memory of a few happy months, a pretty home, a garden full of flowers, a river whose course out to sea I could trace from my bedroom window. My father was a painter. I have sat for his model, and once I went to London with him to see the Royal Academy Exhibition, where two of his pictures were hung on the line—one of them, with Maggie and me as 'Babes in the Wood.' Little did the painter dream how he had forecast our fate, in so far as the cruel treatment we were destined to receive, when he should—as he did soon afterward—lay down his brushes for ever."

His voice faltered, and he walked to the door of the hut. As he stood there gazing out at the sky, he looked the picture of a strong man.

Turning his face toward me as he came back to his seat, I noticed that there were tears in his eyes. It was a handsome, thoughtful, more or less careworn, face. He looked like a man who had traveled, like a man who had fought his way in life, and there was a strong intellectuality in his eyes and forehead.

There were streaks of gray about the temples of his closely cut hair, and light touches of "the silver of age" were repeated on his short dark beard.

He had something of a military air, and he moved slowly, and had the sort of a swing in his gait that men get after long marches. He was not more than twenty-eight, and he looked forty, but with the full strength and vigor of forty.

A trifle over the medium height, he was broad across the chest, and muscular. His voice was somewhat harsh as a rule, though now and then, in moments when the better feelings of his nature were excited, it was soft and even musical.

Now and then since the previous night, when he declared himself Maggie's brother, I traced the likeness between himself and Maggie, not in appearance so much as in manner, not in the features of the face so much as in the occasional expression of the eyes and mouth. While he reseated himself and looked at me as if inviting *me* to continue the conversation, there was in his face something of *the tender, wistful,* regretful, wondering look I had seen in Maggie's.

"Were you only once in London?" I asked, more with a view of breaking in upon his melancholy than for information.

"Yes, twice," he said, "the first time full of joy, the second of misery; the first time the bliss of childhood, the second the despair of a broken heart; the first time innocent, the second time having tasted of the bitter fruit; the first time with a toy in my hand, the second time with a dagger. It is so in storms at sea; a day of gentle calm, a placid ocean, a sunny sky, dreams of heaven; then you should make all taut, for the hurricane is not far away, the night of terror is at hand, the sea a boiling abyss, the ship a coffin, her torn sails ragged mourning plumes. And this is life, my friend. My sunny day was the love of that kind father, the embraces of that sweet sister; and sometimes my mother kissed me. Then came a guest to our house—a gentleman from London; he had been a friend of my father when they were young fellows. His name was Lucas—'Chingford Lucas, M. A.,' I remember reading on his card the first time our servant brought it into my father's studio. He was one of your excessively polite men, curly hair, a light waxed mustache, a high pale forehead, delicately shaped nostrils, a slight stammer in his speech, which my mother said denoted high breeding, had white hands, shiny boots, well-fitting clothes, and a patronizing manner. You say my mother is dead?"

This with a sudden change of manner.

"Yes; Maggie's mother is dead," I replied.

"It is well; may she be forgiven, if that judgment seat exists which the parsons and their Book tell us of! She had known this Lucas before she married my father; he had loved her, people said in their shameless, gossiping way, and dared to be jealous that my father had married her. She had the fatal endowment of beauty, without brains, my poor mother, beauty, without strong moral training, much beauty and little heart, poor soul. This Lucas, this gentleman, professed to be rich, he had some money, a few thousand pounds, lived in chambers, gave my father commissions for pictures, and obtained orders for others; at the same time he lured him to London, as it turned out to his ruin, introduced him to fast clubs, initiated him into gambling, made him the hero of smoking parties, and sent the dear fellow home with his London habits; so that he took to calling at the little hotel in our quiet country town and taking a drink with this man and the other, and horrified us more than once by getting intoxicated. Then he would enter upon a period

of strict moderation, even of abstinence from wine altogether. A kind, clerical neighbor of ours, the vicar of an adjacent parish, had some influence with him, and he helped Maggie and me to keep him at home; for my mother professed to be too much scandalized to take any care about him. This Lucas would say kindly sounding things to her in my father's interest, and was full of professed sympathy; but, as the poor woman said, 'Mr. Lucas was such a gentleman, so high bred, had such refined feelings,' that she 'wondered he should really take so much interest in George.' I hated this Chingford Lucas, M. A.—hated him with a dog's instinct; the more he courted my good opinion, the more I hated him. Dogs and children can scent a scoundrel. Education in the art of good manners kills all this later. Even when my father was overcome with drink, poor fellow, he was genial and pleasant; the only time he was in the least otherwise was the last time of all that he was in that condition—the very last time—I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was autumn; a chilly breeze had come up the river from the sea; a fire had been lighted in the drawing-room; Maggie was in bed, it was nearly nine o'clock; I was sitting up with my mother, father had gone into the town—we lived on the outskirts; I had, in my boyish way, been talking of what I had seen in London when I went up to see father's pictures at the Royal Academy; suddenly we heard voices in the hall; then the door was flung open, and a hat rolled into the room, followed by the mock-heroic exclamation, 'Whoever shall this hat displace, shall meet Bombastes face to face!' And thereupon entered my poor father, smiling cheerfully, and in dumb show inviting sundry opponents to come and displace his hat, which rolled playfully near to the fire-place, and there rested covered with the firelight. My little sister Meg woke up and cried lustily, my mother took the child into her arms, my father tried to kiss them both, my mother angrily repulsed him, and I shrank away behind the sofa, half afraid, half amused.

"'Won't you speak, my chuck; won't you speak to its hubby?' said my father; and then he saw me, and was not pleased that I should see him in a state of intoxication. 'Why is not George in bed?' he asked, the smile leaving his face.

"'Because he is up,' my mother replied, sharply. 'Left hours and hours alone, I may surely have the companionship of my own child.'

"'Hours and hours, what do you mean by hours and hours?' *asked my father.*

"'What do I mean? You ought to be ashamed of yourself!'

"'So he is; so he is,' said Mr. Chingford Lucas, stepping in at the half-open doorway; 'but it was my fault this time. The truth is, I only arrived in Sandwich two hours ago; was very hungry, we met by chance, and as we had a little matter of business to talk about, some pictures, a special commission from London, I asked him to dine with me, and the wine and the business together have excited him a little, that is all. I walked home with him, and should have entered with him, but I was startled by his sudden bit of amusing theatrical business. Pray, accept my apologies, Mrs. Newbolde; and, believe me, that for this little fault of George's, I am more to blame than he is."

"'Come in, come in,' said my father, 'sit down, and don't apologize for me. How I came home is my affair, not yours.'

"In appearance he was, as I said before, a gentleman, this visitor of ours. For that matter, of course, my father was a gentleman; but he was not dressed so well as his companion, nor was there such a tone of authority in his voice; he wore the loose velvet jacket in which he generally painted, a pair of equally loose gray trousers, and a felt hat. My mother received the gentleman with a special show of courtesy, and my father struggled to offer him a chair.

"'George,' said my father, taking my arm gently.

"'Yes, father,' I said, looking up at him.

"'Go to bed.'

"'Yes, father,' I said, hurrying to the staircase and then as quickly returning to kiss him. 'Good-night, father.'

"'Good-night,' he replied, and then his voice suddenly changed as if he was going to weep, and he said again, 'Good-night, my boy.'

"My mother followed me up the stairs, but she did not come into my little room. Hurrying off my clothes, I crept into bed, hid my face in my pillow, and felt wretched. The moon shining in at one corner of the window sent a ray of light across the chamber, falling upon a chest of drawers, and mounting upward in a long column like a ghost. I could hear the murmur of voices in the drawing-room. I prayed for my father and mother and little Meg, drew the sheets more closely round me as that column of moonlight moved gradually near me along the wall, and at last fell asleep and dreamed of some strange land across the seas that washed the shores of the Sandwich country.

"I ask myself now, sitting talking to you, my dear partner, why I dwell upon these trifling details? Ask the criminal who is condemned to die why he thinks of the days of his innocence. Ask the parched traveler in the desert why he dreams of springs and green-fringed rivers. Ask the bankrupt why his mind wanders back to the well-filled coffers of the past. Ask the dying man why he thinks of those early days when he sat by his mother's knee and listened to the sweet music of her loving voice. Ask the rich man in the burning pit why he looks up in vain at Lazarus."

CHAPTER IV.

"THUS BAD BEGINS, AND WORSE REMAINS BEHIND."

"NEVER," continued my host, "had these things troubled me so much as on the day after that altercation between my parents. It had dawned on me some time before that there was something wrong in our household. That humiliating exhibition of drunkenness had confirmed all my boyish doubts and fears, and had settled down into my mind like a dull, painful feeling, in which there was much sorrow and sympathy for my father. If he had not seemed ashamed, I should have thought the incident rather humorous than otherwise—a sort of thing to laugh at, not to cry about. But I had somehow seen his eye fall on me as mine used to fall, seeking the floor when convicted of some childish crime.

"I had noted my mother's angry look as well; and the words she uttered were so hard and sharp, coupled with her previous complaints of my father's conduct, that I sat and brooded over the business until it became a sort of settled sorrow.

"My father was a kind, careless, gentle man. It occurred to me often in later days that it was only since he had renewed his friendship with Mr. Lucas that he had neglected his home and become fond of wine. On the day after that disagreeable incident I have just mentioned, this Lucas called in the afternoon. He said he had the highest opinion of my father, but thought it a pity he should frequent the Norfolk Hotel so much. Some people dared to say Mr. Newbolde went to see the young ladies there, but, of course, *this was not true.* I remember that my mother shook her head

and sighed, and then told me I had better go and look after my little sister. Mr. Lucas patted me on the head; I shivered at his touch. He thrust half a crown into my hand; I threw it away.

"Nothing could have induced me to like him, and my mother was very angry with me when I said he was a disagreeable and hateful man. She said she was a persecuted, unhappy woman, and that nobody took her part.

"I can see her now, with her dark hair falling in curls upon her shoulders, sitting rocking herself to and fro before a pier glass, with little Maggie playing at her feet, and myself sitting by her and wondering at all the mysteries of her toilet.

"She was a pretty woman, as I have said. My father, in the early days of their marriage, had painted her in various characters. She sat before her glass often and dressed her hair in a dozen different ways, and asked Maggie how she liked mamma best—with flowers in her hair or without. As for me, I received but little evidence of her affection. I sometimes think she was jealous of the love I felt for my father, and she did not like the undisguised dislike which I showed for Mr. Lucas, who was, she said, 'so kind to George,' and brought him 'so many useful commissions from London.' There were occasions when she would talk with me and appear to give me her confidence. I was what the vicar, who visited us very often, called an old boy."

"You dislike the Church, but you always speak gently of the vicar," I said, desirous of drawing him out a little in regard to the author of the first part of this general history.

"Ah, yes," he said; "the vicar was more than a parson—he was a man. Next to my father and Maggie I loved him."

"But you loved your mother at some time," I suggested.

"Yes," he said, "and admired her."

"Why not think of her as always belonging to that time? Why not think of her at her best, when—"

"Because her worst," he exclaimed, angrily, "overshadows all the good. Ah, you don't know what you are saying. That vicar could tell you; and he shall if he be alive. He had a heart as big as his parish. He would come and sit in my father's studio and talk of art in such a simple way that even I seemed to understand him. Maggie would climb on his knee and listen, especially when he talked of flowers and the wonders of nature; and he would break off at the height of some discourse touching chiaroscuro and the effects

of lights and shadows, to tell Maggie and me the story of the birth of the dragon-fly."

I might stop him to say that I have noted his mark in "A Tour round my Garden," at the chapter on dragon-flies, and his memorandum, "See the Water-Babies."

Kingsley has, perhaps, described the metamorphosis of the grub that breaks out into sunny splendor more graphically than Alphonse Karr. But I say nothing; the time to speak is not opportune, though my fancy travels back, through the rain, and far away to the vicar's house, and I see in imagination blue and golden wings hovering over the reeds by the rivulet that skirts his garden and then dives under his dining-room, to dart out again, fresh and free, on its way to join the tidal stream beyond.

These thoughts occupy me for a time while I am still listening to my host's narrative; they crop up and hover in my mind like a dragon-fly of memory, as it were, lingering on the river of life.

"Poor old vicar!" went on my host; "he did his best for all of us, and was especially kind to me in the darkest hours of my life. Whenever I talked to my mother in those last days that I saw her, she would always come back, whatever the subject, to complaints of my father's neglect; and then a cloud seemed to fall upon me, and presentiments of evil. For many days after that night, when my father sent me to bed, there was a sort of general warfare going on between my unhappy parents. One night, however, the storm burst furiously, and that long after I was a-bed. I heard my mother say she was deceived—her husband was a drunkard and a beggar. My father rejoined that his wife was a frivolous, silly woman, who thought more about the fashion of her ribbons than the regulation of her household.

"Oh! how I prayed to heaven that peace would come to these people, my parents. How I buried my head in the pillows and sobbed, and longed to throw myself between them and help them to forgive each other!

"The vicar prayed to this end, I am sure; but it was of no more avail, look you, than the prayers of the Pilgrim Fathers who came to New England to worship righteously and according to the Word. Do you know the history of this great America? Just read about the landing at Plymouth Rock, and you will see how the poor people died like sheep—prayed for life, and died, starved with cold, eaten *up with disease.* Where is Mr. Read and his theory in that case?"

He asked me this question with a sneer.

"The great and grand results," I said, "are patent to the humblest intellect."

"Well, well, be it so," he said, "since I too look forward still. But do you wonder that I stand here for Justice, do you wonder that I dream of revenge, that I think of it, and count upon it, and sometimes get it to the full in my dreams—but only in my dreams—do you wonder? Then let me go on with the history of the account, for the settlement of which Fate is my debtor.

"For many days after that afternoon visit of this Mr. Lucas, I would go continually to my father's studio, and sit there silently watching his unavailing efforts to settle down to his work. One day Mr. Lucas came in and gave my father a newspaper, which he read and then handed to me.

"'Take that to your mother, George,' he said, 'and tell her to read it.'

"It was a copy of a London morning paper containing a flattering notice of one of my father's pictures which had been hung at the Royal Academy.

"'Oh, yes, I know all about it,' said my mother, 'Mr. Lucas told me of it. Your father should be very much obliged to him for his kindness.'

"Susan Copley was a favorite servant of my mother. One day my father was sent for to London on a matter of business. A circus had come to Sandwich. My mother gave permission for Susan to take us to see the riders.

"When we were ready to go, she greatly astonished me by taking me into her arms and kissing me so fondly that I couldn't help thinking my prayers of the night before had been answered. When she kissed Maggie, and asked Susan to take care of her, there were tears in her eyes, and the expression of her face seemed to settle into my heart and make it ache. But this soon passed away in the joy of her fervent kiss, and the new sensation of being sent out to be amused and made happy. In later days, in the Old World and in this wild new part of it, I have been to see the riders, that my memory of dishonor and my title to vengeance might not die out. I have been to the circus, as it were to take a voluntary turn upon the rack; to be broken on the wheel of my memory; to suffer and grow strong. I dare say you, dear old partner, have sat in a circus and seen the clown tumble, and may have laughed with the chil-

dren as I laughed when I was a boy; but to me that scene now always fills my ears with sobs that are louder than the laughs. On that night, years ago, while I was applauding the pranks of the clown, Fate was preparing for me such a future as few could have lived through and kept their senses.

"When Maggie and I reached home with Susan after the circus, the house was in disorder; the fires had gone out, the candles were not lighted, and the place was as still as death. I remember grasping Susan by the arm and asking her what was the matter. She did not answer, but lighted the candles and went straight to my mother's room, which was strewn with litter. There was a letter on the dressing-table for my father; I learned this afterward. Susan put Maggie to bed in the next room and hushed her to sleep. My sister was tired with laughing, and worn out with the wonderful performances at the circus; she was soon fast asleep.

"'Mamma,' I cried. 'Mother, where are you?'

"'Don't make a noise,' said Susan; 'she has gone away.'

"While I, her son, was reveling in the quips and cranks of the clown, and falling into a boyish passion of love for the young lady who sprang through paper hoops, and leaped over yards of blue silk, while my father was on his way home from London, while the chaste moon was shining upon Sandwich, my mother was deserting her home, her husband, and her children, for ever; deserting all, perjuring her soul, blackening the innocent names of her offspring, for a cruel, designing villain."

CHAPTER V.

A SAD HOME-COMING.

"THE next day the town rang with the news. 'Pretty Mrs. Newbolde has eloped with that swell Lucas.' Sandwich could hardly remember when it had had such a sensation.

"I heard Susan Copley say to the grocer's wife, 'What could master expect? He never paid missus any attention. Never took *her nowhere*, not so much as to the Kent county ball, which she *had invitations for*, as I see 'em myself. Always either painting or

drunk, either nipping at the tavern or going off on the spree to London. What, I says, could master expect, and his wife so pretty, and so miserable.'

"'But think of the children,' the grocer's wife observed; 'think of them; they bain't to blame, surely, Susan, and they ought to have been considered, the girl especially, not as I ever cared for the boy; but for all that she was his mother.'

"'That's true for you,' said Susan, 'and I'm sure she cried as if her 'art was broke afore she went, you'd ha' thought as she was bein' driven out instead of going of her own free will.'

"'But why didn't you stop her, Susan?'

"'I stop her! How could I, marm, when she sent me to the circus with the children, and Mary, the cook, out for a holiday to see her old mother at Ramsgate, that artful was she.'

"'But I thought you said she cried as she were a-going?' said the grocer's wife.

"'Lor', mam, that were when she kissed the children afore we went to the circus, and she was that fretful all day there was no barin' with her.'

"'You knowed as she was a-going, Susan.'

"'I won't say as I did, and I won't say as I didn't,' she answered, 'but I will repeat as what could master expect coming home drunk and a-going on like a common pussun, with his wife a lady, and that 'andsome gent a-coming visiting as knowed her afore, and was her lover, and would ha' married her if master hadn't been fust hand with him, which such is life, say what you will; and I 'opes as I may never be tempted in the same way.'

"It was a lovely July day. All the windows were open. All the rooms, it seemed to me, were full of people. Nobody noticed me much. I wandered about, and heard the news of the day from every point of view. Everybody kissed and nursed Maggie. I evaded the general touch, the patronizing compassion.

"'How do you know, Susan,' I heard the vicar say, 'that they have gone away together?'

"'I know it, sir,' she answered, 'too well, and that's all I can say.'

"'Did your mistress say so?'

"'As good as.'

"'As good as! but what did she say?'

"'*She was sick of her life*, and couldn't bear master's goings on.'

"'But about going away. Did this person, Mr. Chingford [redacted]u cas, say anything to you?'

"No answer.

"Question repeated.

"Still no answer.

"'Do you hear what I say?'

"'Yes, your reverence.'

"'I am a magistrate, remember; and this unhappy business may not end here. Did he give you money?'

"Susan burst into tears.

"'Did he give you money?' the vicar asked again.

"'Yes, sir, he did.'

"'How much?'

"'Ten pounds."

"'And you sold yourself, your good master, and your foolish mistress, for ten pounds, eh? Is that so?'

"'If you put it that way,' she replied, blubbering; 'but it was missus's wish.'

"'And yet you say she cried as if she was forced to go.'

"'No, sir, I never said such a thing.'

"'You said so to Mrs. Smith, the grocer's wife.'

"'Never, sir, I'll swear it afore a judge and jury!' she exclaimed.

"'You are a wicked woman!' said the vicar, 'and if you had happened to live in my grandfather's time, they would have given you a taste of the ducking-stool, and served you right.'

"'Oh, sir,' she blubbered, 'I wish as I were dead!'

"'It would have been as well, perhaps, if you had wished so a week since and had your wish granted; but the wishes of the ungodly do not prevail; go away, you are a shameless, good-for-nothing creature!'

"A reporter came along to collect information for a local newspaper.

"'Come home with me,' said the vicar to the gentleman of the press: 'you must not print all the foolish gossip you may hear about this affair. There may be no truth in the story at all. But come with me, and I will advise you as to what you should write about it, if it is desirable that you should write anything.'

"As the vicar was leaving the house I followed him.

"'*Do you* really think, Mr. Vicar,' I said, 'that there is no truth *in it—that mamma* will come back?'

"'Ah, my dear George, I wondered what had become of you,' said the vicar.

"'I was standing near you,' I said.

"'Excuse me one moment,' said the vicar to the reporter.

"Then taking me aside, he said:

"'My dear little friend—I may call you friend, eh?—and you will always think of me as your friend, your nearest and dearest friend, next to your father, eh?'

"He spoke very gently, and held my little hand in his great one.

"'Yes, vicar, thank you,' I said.

"'Well, then, be very brave. Your father will come home soon. It is now eleven, he will be at the station at half-past. Go you, and meet him, and bring him to me—will you?'

"'Yes, vicar,' I said.

"'And say, "Father, you are to come with me straight to Vicar Oliphant's before you go home, it is very important he should see you."'

"'Yes, vicar.'

"'And then lead him to me, like this, do you understand?' He led me a little way to indicate loving firmness of mannner.

"'Yes, vicar,' I said.

"'That's all right; I will depend upon you. Good-by, then, until you come with your father; go straight to the station now.'

"I did.

"The English stations are different to the depots in America, as you know. We have neat brick houses and covered platforms. Some of them are gay with flowers. Most of them have book-stalls, similar to those on the Elevated Road of New York. The station I went to was away in some meadows. It had a book-store, and here were plants and flowers in its windows. The fields right and left were sunny. One of them was a hay field. The grass had just been cut. Young larks were flying about in it. Another meadow was green with the aftermath. It was separated from the hay field by a ditch that was full of water and had reeds on each side, reeds and meadow sweet, and there were dragon-flies darting hither and hither, and gay moths. I sat down and watched them, and waited for the train. To this day I can see that picture, every detail of it; I can smell the meadow sweet, and see the reflection of the reeds in the water.

"The train came in presently, and with it my father. He had not looked so well for a long time, and he was in high spirits.

"'Why, George!' he exclaimed, stooping down to kiss me; 'that's a good fellow to come and meet me; but how did you know I should come by this train?'

"'The vicar said so,' I replied, taking his hand.

"'Oh, so he has been to see you! that's right—dear old vicar. I don't know what we should do without him. Ah, there's my bag. Porter, send my bag up home, I shall walk.'

"The porter touched his hat, and took up the portmanteau.

"'Capital to walk home on such a fine day, eh, George?'

"'Yes, father.'

"'First rate, to get back from that dusty old city to these pleasant fields, and to have one's son and heir to meet one, eh, George?'

"'Yes, father.'

"'And I've brought very good news, George, very good; such a commission! But first, how is mamma? Well, of course?'

"He did not wait for me to reply, but went on chatting.

"'Mamma shall have such a new dress, and such a pair of diamond ear-rings! George, I am going to tell you something.'

"He paused and looked around as if he were about to tell me a great secret.

"'Yes, father.'

"'I don't think I have been quite so good a father to you all as I might be; but—'

"'Oh, father!' I exclaimed, and I began to cry, for it seemed to me, boy as I was, that his words were so out of gear with the tidings the vicar had for him that his poor heart must break when he should learn what had happened.

"'Hallo!' he said. 'Pooh, pooh, George; don't cry about it. I have not been such a ruffian as all that."

"'Oh, no, no; but I do love you so much, father,' I said, checking my tears.

"'God bless you!' he said, stooping once more to kiss me. 'Well, I have resolved, George, to be such a good father as never was heard of. No more wine at all, George—you know what I mean, don't you—and the nation has bought that picture with you and Maggie in it. There, what do you think of that, you rascal? And the commission—what do you think it is? To paint the Royal *Wedding for* Windsor Castle. There!—is that not good news?'

"'Yes, father.'

"'Yes, father,' he said, mocking me in a cheery way; 'I should think it is. And I and your mother will have to go to London and stay for a long while, and perhaps you and Maggie may come also. I shall have sittings from all the royalties and great people, George; and all their grand dresses will be sent to the studio—a London studio, George. And won't that delight mamma, eh?'

"'This way, father,' I said, pressing his hand; 'this way.'

"'No, this is the shortest. I don't want to go into the town,' he said.

"'The vicar wants to see you,' pulling his arm in the direction that led away from the old house.

"'Well, by and by,' he replied, resisting.

"'No, now, father—before you go home,' I said.

"'Why?' he asked, looking down at me.

"'He will tell you, father,' I said, and the tears would be checked no longer; I clasped his hand with both of mine and laid my face on it, and sobbed as if my heart was breaking.

"'Why, great God!' he exclaimed; 'what has happened, George?'

"My only answer was to pull him in the direction of the vicar's house.

"'What is it, George, my dear fellow? My dear boy, what is it?'

"'The vicar will tell you,' I said, between my sobs.

"'Did he send you to meet me?'

"'Yes, father, dear.'

"He spoke no more, but went with me to the vicar's house."

CHAPTER VI.

"FOUND DROWNED," AND A VOW OF VENGEANCE.

"IT was a pitiable sight to see my father," continued my host, after a pause, "a pitiable sight. He was torn with alternate fits of rage and sorrow, of weeping and cursing, of morbid sobriety and wild drunkenness. Now he would fall back on his pride and profess *not to be troubled*; then he would upbraid himself; then he

would upbraid my mother. Never once did he mention the name of Lucas—not in my hearing.

"The blow at his peace was all the harder that it occurred when he was full of good intentions, and when the greatest happiness seemed within his reach. Never put any confidence in to-morrow, Hickory. 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die,' is one of the scriptural things you may hold on to. My father came home joyful, a changed man, with a great ambition. Concurrent with the delight of an unexpected success were his schemes for making his wife happy—fine dresses, diamond earrings, a long visit to London. He was very happy—too happy; so he was struck down, his hope and ambition, his good intentions, his kindly programme all beaten out of him. In the darkness of the time he fondled Maggie and clung to me. We walked about the garden with him, Maggie taking one hand, I the other. The vicar would come daily—hourly almost—to help us comfort our father.

"Susan Copley begged on her knees not to be sent away, and was forgiven. The vicar made her confess all, and the story developed a carefully planned and cruel conspiracy on the part of Lucas.

"My father broke down at last under the weight of his trouble. He was more frequently at last to be found at the Kent Arms than at home. As the autumn approached the winter months, the house grew more and more lonely. The leaves fell from the trees earlier than usual; nipping frosts destroyed the flowers; the wind came sighing up the river; the ivy flapped in a ghostly way at the window panes at night. I think that from about eleven years of age I grew to be twenty in one month—twenty in feelings, twenty in melancholy.

"Susan Copley, being unable to read or write, had concentrated what little intellect and imagination she possessed on omens and presentiments.

"'I know as something else's going to happen,' she said. 'I see a funeral in the candle last night as I was going to bed—and the last time as I see one my mother died. This morning, afore it was light, I 'eard death ticks, and I was that frightened I thought I should have to a got up and waked the cook.'

"One might easily have had forebodings of ill in that old house, in those sad days of autumn. To know what had passed, to see my father's hopeless condition, was to have evil presentiments about *the future. I had* them, heaven knows. It seemed to me as if the

wind roaring up the river had them; as if the paint hardened in patches of color on my father's palette had them; and his draped wooden model, that stood by the old fireplace in the studio, seemed to have a warning finger continually pointing toward the river. What a desolate house it was!—and is, I believe; and is. I have seen it once since I left the town for good. Yes; and I shall see it once again.

"And it was not for nothing the wind sighed, the ivy tapped at the windows, the candles guttered, the death spiders ticked, and the dumb, draped figure pointed its wooden finger to the river.

"'Mister Newbolde's found drowned!' shouted a boyish voice one first day of November, just as Susan was telling me at breakfast that father had not been home all night; 'and they've took him to the Kent Arms to 'ole a hinquest on him.'

"Susan Copley fainted; the cook brought her to with burnt feathers; and Maggie, more frightened at this business than the news, began to cry. I put my arms round her and soothed her. I couldn't cry, and didn't for many a long day.

"They were carrying him into the Kent Arms (the house was in a different parish) as I reached the door; carrying him in on a shutter, all wet, his poor dead hand that I had held so often swinging between the bearers. There was a wound on his forehead, his clothes were torn, and his poor dear eyes were wide open.

"It needs the memory of that awful sight to nerve my resolution sometimes.

"They tried to exclude me from the room where the inquest was held; but I fought and struggled, and the vicar interposed.

"'I am no child,' I said; 'I am a man, and I shall not cry, and I am not afraid, but I must hear all they say.'

"'You shall, my son, and you shall sit by me,' said the vicar.

"I had heard it was really thought my father had been murdered.

"'And if he has,' Susan Copley had exclaimed in my presence, 'that villain have done it, for I'll swear I see him last night as I was a puttin' the drawin'-room shutters to. Didn't I say so, cook?'

"'You said as you thought you'd seen a ghost and 'twas like Mister Lucas in a clergyman's coat.'

"The evidence showed that the poor dear fellow had left the inn, where he was now lying dead, at about nine o'clock, to go home. The barmaid said he was a little 'the worse for liquor;' the

landlord said in his opinion he was not; two workmen said whe crossing the bridge at seven in the morning they saw a body lyin partly in the water, partly on the bank, as if the tide had left it The head and shoulders were in the water; it was close by th bridge, and just below the place where a piece of the rail of th bridge had been broken. Was it freshly broken? they were asked Yes, they said, but they had noticed it was broken the day before Medical evidence was given that the wound on the head might hav been the result of a blow with a blunt instrument, or it might hav been the result of a fall against the timbers of the bridge close b which the body was lying. There were two theories to account fo death. The first, that the poor fellow, being intoxicated, had falle into the river at the place where the bridge was damaged, that in falling his clothes had caught in the rail and been torn, that striking the water at the point where the bridge was braced with iron timbers he had struck his head, and being stunned, had rolled into the river and was drowned. What was he doing on the bridge? was one of the questions that cropped up, seeing that he was going home, and the bridge did not lead homeward. This was answered by the suggestion that he might have been going to the 'Mariner's Inn,' which was situated on the other side of the river, as he had been known to go there on several occasions lately after nine o'clock.

"'But, Mr. Coroner,' said the vicar, 'with all due respect to your honorable court, and by your leave, there is a witness who heard voices and a cry of "Oh! you ruffian," near the bridge last night.'

"'Indeed,' said the coroner, 'then by all means let him come forward and be sworn.'

"Thereupon the porter who had carried my father's bag from the station pushed his way through the crowd, and stated that the last train having come in, he was going home—he lived down on the other side of the river, about half a mile below the bridge—and he heard voices, but thought nothing of it, and shouldn't have done now, only when he heard that Mr. Newbolde was drowned, and had a cut on his forehead, he bethought himself that one of the two who seemed to be scuffling said, 'Oh! you ruffian,' and then he heard no more. The night was very dark, the tide was running out, and it was a little after nine o'clock.

"No other evidence was offered, and the jurymen were talking *and arguing with* each other over the porter's statement.

"'Will they not call Susan?' I asked the vicar; 'she has something to say.'

"'Has she, my dear boy? What has she to say?'

"'That she saw Lucas look into the drawing-room window last night.'

"'Indeed, indeed,' he said; 'I hadn't heard of that; is that so?'

"'Yes, yes,' I said, quickly.

"'Will you forgive me once more, Mr. Coroner? I know I have no right to speak, but I also know that you desire to sift this painful affair to the utmost.'

"'Go on, Mr. Vicar, I will gladly hear you.'

"'Is it your intention to call Susan Copley?'

"'Mr. Constable, where are you?'

"'Here, sir.'

"'Is Susan Copley a witness?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Would you like her to be called, Mr. Vicar!' asked the coroner.

"'Yes, Mr. Coroner. I believe she has made a statement to the effect that a certain person, not quite a stranger, was in the town last night, and this, coupled with the evidence of Henry Jones, the railway porter, might, perhaps, influence the verdict of the jury.'

"'Call Susan Copley,' said the coroner.

"'Susan Copley,' shouted half a dozen voices; but no Susan Copley responded.

"'She is at the house, perhaps,' I whispered to the vicar; and he offered the same suggestion to the coroner.

"'Let Susan Copley be sent for,' said the coroner. 'Meanwhile the depositions can be read over to the witnesses and signed.'

"Then there ensued a monotonous repetition of the evidence read out to the witnesses by the clerk, and in the midst of which Susan Copley entered the court.

"'Take the book,' said the coroner's clerk.

"'Yes, sir.'

"'The evidence you shall give to the court touching the death of Edward Barnes Newbolde shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God,' said the clerk, or words to that effect.

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Kiss the book,' said the clerk. 'You know what an oath is?'

"'Yes, sir,' she said, and kissed the Testament.

"'Then tell us, my good woman,' said the coroner, 'what you know about the unfortunate death of your master.'

"'Yes, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury,' she said, looking first at the coroner and then at the jury, with a calm but very white face. 'I know that he did it.'

"'That he did it?' repeated the coroner; 'who did what?"

"'That Mr. Lucas killed my master,' she said.

"'Stop, stop,' said the coroner, 'what do you mean; do you mean to say you saw the deed committed?'

"'Not exactly that, but I as good as see it; leastwise, if I had I couldn't be more certain; for he was that base he would stick at nothing; didn't he get the poor master to sign away all his property to missus? and I saw him last night between eight and nine a lookin' into our windows; and, oh, good gentlemen, my master's bin murdered, and it's me as ought to be hanged for it; and there's his dirty money, as is burning my pocket out and scorching my soul to pieces.'

"She flung a ten-pound note upon the table, and covered her face with her hands, rocked herself to and fro, and moaned. The court was still as death. The jurymen looked at each other. The crowd gaped open-mouthed at Susan. The coroner wiped his spectacles. I clutched the vicar's hand, my heart beating wildly.

"'This is very extraordinary,' said the coroner. 'Compose yourself, Susan Copley, compose yourself, and sit down.'

"Then began a very lengthened examination of Susan, which led to an exhaustive deposition, the points of which were a matter of suspicion that Chingford Lucas, who had destroyed the peace of our house, had been seen in Sandwich about the period of the death of my father, and that he had a possible interest in his death, if he controlled Mrs. Newbolde, in whose favor settlements had been made, as alleged by Susan Copley.

"'Can I give evidence?' I remember asking, as if I were speaking in a dream. It seemed to me as if the sting and the truth had been taken out of Susan's statement by the time that it was read over to her; she had had to admit her omens and presentiments and ghosts; and her declaration that she knew Lucas had killed my father was not written down at all. What could I know about what *was legal evidence* and what was not? I only felt that while they

were writing the criminal was escaping. So I stood up. 'Can I give evidence?'

"'Are you the deceased gentleman's son?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'My dear young friend, we are all deeply grieved for you, and, of course, will hear anything you may say, but perhaps the vicar or your poor father's solicitor will advise you.'

"The vicar did not speak. I looked round at him, and it seemed as if he left me to my own judgment.

"'Thank you, sir, for being sorry, but I want justice. My father has been murdered by that man Lucas. Send and have him arrested.'

"'Ah, my young friend is saying what he does not quite understand,' said the coroner.

"'He has stolen my mother, murdered my father; and some day, by God's help, I will kill him.'

"I said by God's help, I remember, out of deference to the vicar; a curious sort of notion, but true to my feelings at the time, which seemed to struggle to give an assurance to my father that he should not go unavenged. I wanted to register a vow, and had no right method to go upon; but I said what was in my mind, and sat down.

"'Amen,' said a voice in the crowd; 'and I hope you will live to do it, youngster.'

CHAPTER VII.

"THE DAY WILL COME."

"NOTHING came of all this," continued my host, "nothing, except that Mr. Chingford Lucas offered himself to the police for public or private examination, threatened Susan Copley with an action for criminal libel, and became entirely master of the situation.

"He committed these audacities through his solicitors in London, and at the same time proposed to take me under his protection. The lawyer who had advised my father on such small legal matters as belonged to our family affairs, had a long correspondence with Lucas's solicitors. Lucas was living on the Continent, they said, but they were prepared to produce him at any moment.

"The *vicar, by his own* motive, had a detective down from Scot-

land Yard, but he could not collect evidence enough to venture upon any charge against Lucas, who, on the statement of Susan Copley getting wind, had at once given the coroner what were regarded as ample proofs that he was in Florence at the time in question. The truth is, we were nowhere, though the vicar, the last time I saw him, six years ago, was of my opinion that this ruffian Lucas murdered my father."

"What, then, was the ultimate verdict of the jury?" I asked.

"Found drowned!" he answered; "what they call an open verdict.

"The old house, where we had all been so happy and so miserable, blossomed into auction posters. They filled the windows, and were stuck upon the walls. One day a crowd of people came and entered into possession of the place, and the vicar took Maggie and me to his house. Susan went with us; but she was curious about the auction sale. She passed most of the day going to and fro between the vicar's house and the Manse, that she might tell us what the things sold for. Poor little Maggie! she did not realize the misery of what was going on. I felt beaten down and helpless.

"In the afternoon I took Maggie out for a walk, toward the railway station; it was an early day in spring, and the world was full of promise of fruits and flowers, orchards in blossom, marsh marigolds gilding the landscape.

"As we returned to the vicar's, we met porters and others carrying to their homes and shops, and to the railway, pieces of furniture and bric-à-brac they had bought at the sale by auction of 'the late Mr. Newbolde's effects.' One man carried a picture, another a pair of vases, a third had in his arms an old-fashioned chair from my own bedroom. Then came a cartload of things, household goods, and I turned away and went across the fields, down by the river, and over the bridge; *that* bridge which I hope to cross once again. Well, on the other side of the river I met a fisherman, who talked to us, and moved thereto by something I said, he remarked that I was a fine spirited lad, and that if I was not so much of a gentleman he would give me two shillings a week and my living to help him with his nets, and go out fishing with him. I said I was not such a gentleman as he thought, and I would take his offer.

"When we went back to the vicar's, I told his reverence what the fisherman had proposed, and what I had done; and he said I *was a brave lad,* and that there was nothing like self-reliance. By

all means, he said, I was to take the fisherman's offer; he was the greatest gentleman, he said, who was not ashamed of earning an honest living; the sea was a noble calling, he said, but I was never to forget that he, the vicar, was my friend and guardian—self-elected, he said, 'but your guardian and Maggie's, and your true friend always.' I have never forgotten his kind words. 'You are not rich,' he said, 'my dear boy, and it has pleased the Lord to afflict your youth with a great sorrow; but He has given you a brave heart, and your first step in this new and sad life is honorable to your head and heart.'

And so I went, and became boy to Digges the fisherman and his boat *The Fair Aline*. It was a great change of life, and fare, but it helped me from thinking too much, and it made me strong. The vicar kept Maggie, and I do not know what became of the woman Susan. I went to see Maggie every Sunday, and to spend the day at the vicarage, as people called it, out of compliment; for the vicar had no cure of souls in Sandwich, he lived there, and preached in a church some miles away. He used to give me bits of Latin exercises to chew over in my leisure moments, and to keep me from thinking too much, or brooding on my misery. But nothing would shut out from me the memory of that dead face with the scar on its forehead; nothing could make me forget the thief who had stolen away my mother; nothing could shake my vow of revenge. 'Oh that I were a man!' was one of my constant wishes, 'But the day will come,' one of my most consoling reflections. I think much of my sorrow of my father was sopped up in my hope of vengeance. People talk of not looking to have old heads on young shoulders; but they talk ignorantly; let them go among the poor and miserable, they will find plenty of old heads on young shoulders. Experience is age, not years always, and some boys of twelve and fifteen have seen more of life, and felt more of its responsibilities, than some men of fifty.

"What an awful life my boy's life was! What an awful life is my manhood! I am not thirty, yet I feel that I might be any age, that I might be the Wandering Jew, an outcast, a vagrant, a drunkard, a madman—yet always with a mission. I am waiting until I meet that fiend of my boyhood. When he crosses my path, or I his, then will be enacted a just retribution. And the time is coming sooner than he thinks.

"I had to cross that bridge continually going to the vicar's and

to the cottage of old Digges, and I could never shut out that picture of the sad November morning, and I saw it continually in sunshine and in shadow.

"One Sunday when I went to the vicarage, his reverence met me with a most pained and anxious expression of face.

"'What is wrong, vicar?'

"'Have you seen Maggie?' he asked, answering my question with another.

"'Seen her, no!' I exclaimed; 'not since last Sunday.'

"'She has gone away,' he said.

"'Gone away? Where? How? When?'

"'On Friday evening,' he said, 'my housekeeper went out to see a friend; she was not away more than half an hour. I was in the library; Maggie was in her room, as we thought. Old Sarah, my housekeeper, however, came to me to see if Maggie was with me; an hour later she came to say she feared something had happened to Maggie—she had gone! I concluded that Maggie had gone into some neighbor's house, though she was not in the habit of doing so, being so young, and I sent out to inquire after her. Nobody had seen her. We sent round to old Digges's cottage. The fisherman was out with his boat, you with him. No tidings of her all night; you had not returned; our only hope was in you—we thought she might have gone with you and Digges. It was a forlorn sort of hope that; but we clung to it. All day yesterday there was a hue and cry out—no trace of her. My neighbors wanted me to have the river dragged, but I gave no orders to that effect. The river has, nevertheless, been dragged; but no Maggie, and in this instance I say, thank God, no Maggie.'

"I sat down in the vicar's hallway very much overcome. The bells of Sandwich were chiming for morning service. A thrush was singing joyously in an old elm in the vicar's garden.

"'Keep a good heart, my dear boy, God's will be done. My theory is that Mr. Chingford Lucas has stolen her for your mother. Probably this scoundrel will marry your mother now. He will thus control what money she possesses. Your father settled upon her everything he had in the world three months ago, furniture, pictures, life insurance, and some shares in the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway.'

"While we were talking a telegraph messenger came up the *garden path.*

"'The Rev. Mr. Oliphant,' he said.

"'That is my name,' responded the vicar.

"'Telegram—five shillings for messenger, Sandwich office being closed.'

"'Very well,' said the vicar, handing the boy the money and me the telegram.

"I opened it, and read—

"'From Mrs. Newbolde, London.

"'Maggie is with me; we are now starting for Vienna; she will be well cared for and educated; she is the one comfort I need; thank you for all your kindness to her. She sends her love, and is very happy to be once more with her mother.'

"'As I thought,' said the vicar; 'your mother no doubt made it a condition of her remaining with Lucas that Maggie should be restored to her; a condition of marriage, perhaps, who knows? Or a condition of executing deeds in his favor. Who can tell?'

"'Do you believe this telegram?' I asked.

"'Yes; but of course he wrote it, or dictated it.'

"Sandwich gossiped about this new incident in the history of the Newboldes. The women said it was a good thing for the child that her mother had sent for her. The men said Lucas was an infernal scoundrel, and that he would come to a bad end. They said nothing ill of my mother, out of respect for me, I suppose; and it was not until afterward that I came to fully understand how cruelly she had behaved. Not a message for me; not a word, not a line; she left me alone in the world, without a future. If Maggie had remained to me, I could have striven, and fought, and worked for her. To be her protecter and shield, would have represented to me all that is noble in ambition. But if Fate, or the Providence you believe in, has had a hand in this, I conclude that it was so ordained that I might have but one thing in life to accomplish—the avenging of my father's downfall and death.

"Left alone in the world, I accepted the shelter of Vicar Oliphant's kindly roof; boy as I was, I had resisted the offer of this hospitality when I felt that I ought to work for Maggie. But this last stay to my poor existence gone, I braced myself up for the work that was before me. To enable me to hold my own in the contest with Lucas, I felt that it was necessary to educate both mind and

body, to cultivate the one, to train the other, to make myself if possible an athlete body and soul, to be skilled in intellectual fence, and to be capable physically. During the last two or three years I have strained the capacity of the fine constitution thus laid down, taxed it to the utmost with the fatigues of manual labor and the poison of drink.

"Ah, if things had been different with me! Now and then the quiet of the vicar's cultivated home stole into my soul, and I had dreams of forgetfulness. The vicar led me with a gentle hand and a mind stored with knowledge through the classic paths of the Latin poets; we read philosophy together, and we studied the natural history of books and of nature. I became, the vicar said, quite a scholar, and the local fishermen said I could sail a boat with the best of them. So far the training of my body has been of the most practical service to me, though I have found comfort in books. I have had more opportunities to test the strength of my hands than the culture of my brain; and the nautical knowledge I picked up among the Sandwich and Deal fishermen has served me in good stead more than once.

"I have many a time exclaimed with Hamlet:

"'The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.'

There is, I know, a wild egotism in this parallel; yet my wrongs are to my mind as deep and wide, as all-absorbing as his—a father murdered, a mother fled with the assassin; nay, count myself as the most wronged of the two, and this you will think is egotism gone mad. So it may be for aught I know; but, oh, heavens! had I had the opportunities for a quick vengeance that Hamlet had, the slayer of my father's peace, the assassin of my father's life, would not have lived to strut through a five-act play.

"Poor Hamlet! Do you know I have pitied him as if he had really lived, aye, and as if I had known him, for, look you, a fellow-feeling has hooks of steel to hang one's thoughts upon other's woes. Mad! They say Hamlet was mad; he was just as mad as I am, just as mad as any other man would be under the same circumstances. It is not necessary to be a prince, or a scholar, or a dreamer, or well brought up, or carefully nurtured, or in good society, as the fools in London call mixing with snobs and tuft hunters. You could feel as Hamlet felt about the murder of his father if you *were a peasant* of the fields, a miner in the Rockies, a fisherman, a

sailor, a thing that Society wipes its feet upon, and will not allow to have a soul to be saved, except under the patronage of a Church.

"When I think of these things, I scorn your clerical arrangements and all that they profess to lead up to. I defy them and all the rules and regulations man has made to exalt money above life; and I lay my ear to the earth as the Indian does to listen for the steps of the enemy he has doomed.

"The vicar sent a private detective on the track of Lucas, and he brought reports of him and my mother, and Maggie, at one time in London, at another in Paris, and at another in Vienna. My old friend did not give me details, but he satisfied himself that Maggie was really with her mother, in good health, and evidently happy. And then the days went on, and the weeks and months; I studied hard, and in three years' time was learned in many things. Nobody came to live in the old Manse. The vicar obtained permission to attend to the garden, and after a time, when I had mastered my feelings sufficiently to go there with him, we used to spend some hours there every week, digging, raking, planting, and keeping the sweet memory of the dear old home green. He little thought how these visits also kept green the wounds in my heart. I kept all that to myself; and one day, when I found my affections turning themselves round about the vicar, when I found my heart softening to the past, and my mind becoming absorbed in the pleasant studies and recreations of the vicar's library, and in the sports and pastimes of field, and river, and sea, then I went out upon the bridge, reaffirmed my oath, and the next day I was far away from Sandwich. I left the vicar a few grateful words, full of grief and thanks, but also supplemented with a reference to the duty I owed to the memory of my murdered father.

"And thereupon began my pilgrimage of vengeance. I followed his trail from London to Paris; from Paris to Monaco; from Monaco to the Black Forest. I obtained intelligence of him under various names in Milan, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. I saw him once in Paris, in a gambling-house, but only for a moment; the police had raided the house almost simultaneously with my entrance. I got in as a messenger. But why go into these details? Fate has been against me; for he could not know I was after him. He has lived a strange life—gambler, cheat, financier, spy, police agent, speculator, and his business has been in many lands. I

traced him to New York, to San Francisco; then I concluded to lay by and wait. I had been a sailor, a clerk, a railway porter, and at San Francisco I fell in with a party of miners. Making a little money, I determined to make more, and to employ the sleuth hounds of private detection to help me in my search. Sitting still set me thinking; making money set me drinking; pioneering gave me a taste for mining adventure; fighting Indians seemed to give scope for the brutality that is in my nature; I think the drink made me mad, reckless, brave, perhaps. I was another being; for a time I seemed to forget my mission; but I was only building in the foundations stronger—getting money; for money can buy allies, can multiply hands, can lengthen the reach of arms; and it came into my mind also that as I had pretty well gone round the world after this Lucas, I would sit down, like the drunken fool in the picture, and let the world go round until he came to me. A silly idea, eh? Truly; so silly, that when I found myself entertaining it one night down at the 'Castle' bar, entertaining it, chuckling over it, and repeating it as if it were wisdom, I came to the conclusion that I was really going mad. Perhaps it was delirium tremens, I don't know. They say I picked a quarrel with Nigger Jack that night and shot him. I don't remember it; but Nigger Jack was the terror of the gulch, the terror of half the country this side the Rockies, for that matter, boasted that he had killed fourteen men; and it was an act of grace, a providential thing to have him die in his boots. And as everybody gave me credit for that good action, I took it after I came to, for I was raving mad they said for a week. Lady Ann nursed me, and but for her nursing I would have died. I made a note of all this when I got well again, and reformed somewhat, took hold of myself, put on the brake.

"And so, dear friend, I have waited for tidings of him. The marks of my footsteps are in many countries, and I am here, thousands of miles from civilization, to hear of him, to find the clew. You bring me the token, with a blessing in it. I take it on my knees with gratitude. You see I am something more than the rough, hardened, drunken brute that the gulch thinks me. I have studied human nature, and know how to treat the rugged bear, and how to lie down with the lamb. Misfortune has taught me philosophy. Riches have been given to me, at least for her—for my sister Maggie, and for you, my dear partner; for you, the messenger in the *wilderness. As for* him, we shall stand face to face again on that

bridge, at midnight. I see him now, creeping in the shadow as if he feared a ghost, cowering before me, who am the image of my dead father. I cling to the motto 'the day will come.'"

He was on his feet now, my host, pacing the room, clinching his right hand as if it held a dagger. I rose and stood on guard; he stopped, looked at me, and laughed wildly.

"You think I *am* mad!" he exclaimed, "and it is enough to make me crazy to think of these things, is it not? But you go crazy only when you can do nothing but think of them; the relief comes when you talk of them. When I was in San Francisco I used to go into the Chinese quarters and smoke that I might dream of them, that I might find relief in enacting my mission; but I had no dreams, and if I had, my wildest ideas would not have brought you to me with the clew in the darkness—you with the silken thread and your love for Maggie, you with your good news and your good heart, you with your honest soul bathing in the sunshine of a pure love. Ah, I do begin to think there is a great Heavenly hand in all this. You'll find me going to church as I did when a boy, should we ever meet in a city."

Then pausing to fix his eyes upon mine, he said: "Now listen, partner—listen, Hickory Maynard! Your Fitzherbert Willoughby is my Chingford Lucas; your Margaret is my Maggie; I am George Newbolde. The only man who has any right to stand between you and this girl you love, takes your hand in his and gives his consent to your marriage."

He took my right hand in his, and laid his left hand over both.

"That man makes two easy conditions in giving that consent; he is to provide her dowry, and he is to have the pledge of your solemn oath never to reveal to her what has transpired between you and me—never to mention me or our conversation to her; and when she is your wife, you are to do your best to forget that there ever was such a person as George Newbolde, ever such a person as 'the Boss of Drummond's Gulch.'"

"It is a hard condition," I said.

"What?"

"To carry such a secret as this through the remainder of my life. I can never forget you."

"Not forget me! I have done you no wrong, and what people call kindness is easy enough to forget. Why, I have met men who could not remember what you call an obligation for a whole day—

except to resent it. Come, give me your word, I am no longer excited."

He released my hand, took my arm, and drew me to the door.

"It is a long way to England," he said; "far, far away beyond that misty river, over yonder misty mountains; and she is waiting for you there; perhaps she is in trouble, perhaps he has carried her away to some other land to hide her from you, perhaps she is in danger, a prisoner in some gloomy convent, or locked up in some London cellar; who knows what may be happening to her while we stand here miles away beyond civilization; thousands of miles of sea between us and London? What can you do without my help? Nothing, as yet. Have you money? No; for the lawyer has not yet drawn up our agreement of partnership; the scrip of the Revenge is still in my possession. Do I ask any idle or vicious condition for my help? No. Do I put you under an obligation? No. You are engaged to marry my sister. I am her only living relation that I know of. I am rich. You honor me by desiring to become my brother-in-law. I am alone in the world, and I offer you my friendship, and invite you to become my partner. Margaret has no father. She was too young when he died to remember anything about him. She has no brother, except one whom she thinks dead. Let me be dead still to her. Why burden her mind with my sorrows, with my troubles? Why haunt her life with my shadow, perhaps with my ghost? I am not in her world; she does not know me; I love her too much to catch from her one ray of sunshine that you and I may attract toward her. Let me have my way, brother."

He spoke in soft, appealing tones. There were accents in his voice that reminded me of her own.

"You have suffered but a short eclipse of your happiness," he went on. "You give the pledge, you swear the oath now; to-morrow we part forever, as if we had never met, unless my story has changed your views in regard to Margaret Newbolde. That is her name. Let it be registered in the register at Sandwich church. You will marry her there, and then leave for Italy that very day. Take her for a long, happy tour beneath sunny skies. You are surprised that I am so calm and quiet. It is the eve of the coming day. Have you ever been lost at sea, the prey of darkness, to find yourself safe at dawn off a friendly coast? That is how I feel now. Good-night, Hickory Maynard! To-morrow, good-by! The next *day, strangers—for* her sake!"

"Let it be as you wish," I answered. "I accept the conditions."

"On your oath and on your honor?"

"On my honor and on my oath."

Looking back to the night when these closing revelations were made to me, concluded as they were with a vow on my part and a bond on his, I do not honestly think I could possibly have acted otherwise than to accept his conditions. One is always wise after the event. I don't even now know whether I regret having given the vow. I believe I think I was right. If one through life could know the exact result of our most important actions before committing them, life would be robbed of much of its romance, possibly be less worth living than it is at present.

It was a strange thing that I should go away from the very heart of culture in London, to find a philosopher in the boss of a mining camp on the other side of the Atlantic; not a rough materialist quoting commonplace experience, but a cultured philosopher, who might have disputed with Ruskin, or taken sides with Mallock—a mining expert and a fighter of Indians, a vagabond since a boy, and with a mission of vengeance in his heart. And yet this man had set me thinking about life and its duties, religion and its tenets, the world beyond the grave, as no teaching at Oxford had set me thinking, as no struggles for advancement in London had moved me to philosophizing.

There was, moreover, a picturesqueness of illustration in my host's narrative, an out-of-the-way expression of sentiment, a possibility of a noble career blighted, and a seeming knowledge of this in his reflection that made him very attractive to me. Moreover, the strange circumstance of that casual visit of mine to Sandwich binding my fortunes up with his as if by the direct interposition of Providence, intensified the influence which he exercised over me. I should have been inhuman to resist him, even had he not been her brother. These feelings and opinions move me now after all is over. I am not trying to justify myself, nor to approve my conduct. Whether I did right or wrong is for others to judge. There are lives which belong to smooth rivers; there are lives that belong to rushing torrents. Fate is oftentimes too strong for the strongest will, the most calm temperament. But what a curious, complicated, strange freak of fortune it was that mixed me up with the story of that house to let at Sandwich!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORROW AND THE PARTING.

"TO-MORROW, good-by!" he had said; "the next day, strangers!"

I found myself continually repeating the words, as if I were learning them by heart—as if they were the key to some strange puzzle, the oral passport through the lines of an enemy, with the promise of freedom beyond. They haunted me.

"To-morrow, and the next day," I found myself saying to myself; "to-morrow has no next day, it has only yesterdays."

But my host's to-morrow came in due course, and when it dawned my partner, my prospective brother-in-law (shall we henceforth call him George Newbolde, for that is his proper name?), drew his bunk out of the niche in which it was packed, and from an excavation beneath he took out a bundle of owner's shares in the Revenge Silver Mine, Drummond's Gulch, Colorado.

I noticed the breadth of his shoulders, the narrowness of his hips as he stooped down, the swollen muscles of his arms, and as he turned toward me the square forehead, the firm mouth, the prominent nose. He was a picture of health and strength, his beard dark as his hair but for the streaks of gray in them, his eyes brave and steadfast, except when he talked of Chingford Lucas, and then they were restless, and wandered as one who sought something, or as one who suffered mentally.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked, as he laid the shares and a bundle of greenbacks upon the table.

"I was thinking what a strong fellow you are, and how well you look."

"I never felt stronger, never better—a mind at rest, that's it."

"And is your mind at rest?"

"For the first time since I ran away from the vicarage at Sandwich."

"I was also thinking how strange it is that Margaret should be your sister, and that I should come all this way to give you tidings of her."

"*Yes.*"

"And that but for meeting Mr. Wilkess at Chicago I should probably have never come to the Gulch."

"Yes, it seems as if Manny Wilkess had been sent to meet you—as if my early prayers had been all this time reaching Heaven."

"Do you think, then, that Heaven has elaborated its answer, even to the importation of the Tombstone banker into the scheme?"

"I don't quite know what I think, but I feel that Heaven, or Fate, or what you like, has decreed that Chingford Lucas is to be punished in this world whatever may happen in the next, and that the vow that boy made over his father's dead body at Sandwich was not an empty one."

"But you don't think Heaven would have any hand in the anticipation of its judgment and vengeance by mortal means? You don't think that prayers such as you have offered up are anything but impious? I am not offering opinions, only asking questions."

"Right, youngster, I am not offended. The discussion is pleasant. It helps to show me the path. It clears the way. If a sparrow does not fall without Heaven's permission, do you think it will not interfere to save the wolf Lucas, if he is worth it?"

"I hope it will interfere to save you from committing a crime."

"Don't say that," he answered, quickly, "unless you regard the fulfillment of my vow a crime."

"I do."

"Had you the cause for revenge that I have, and you met the betrayer of your mother, the murderer of your father, would you not kill him?"

"I think not. It would be a poor revenge that should end in my being hanged for murder."

"If when you get back to England you found that this man Lucas had forced your sweetheart into a position worse than death, what would you do?"

"You put an impossible case," I replied, fencing with the question, as the blood rushed into my face.

"Not at all," he said, coolly; "he is capable of it; he is the sort of man who would sell her for fifty pounds if he wanted the money."

"But there must be two to such a bargain," I said.

"Oh, no," he replied; "a convenient place and time and a little chloroform, nothing easier."

"Great Lord!" I exclaimed, beside myself, as I followed my host's suggestion. "Don't torture me!"

"And supposing when you got back to London she should confess her shame as Lucretia told hers in the classic story, what would you do?"

"Tear the life out of him!" I exclaimed, pacing the hut, to be stopped in my mad career by the grip of my host's strong hand.

"Of course you would, the beast!" he said. "Kill him as you would a wolf in your sheep-fold! Ah! my friend, don't set up for a Christian philosopher. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin: a kindred misery and woe binds together the most opposite of men."

"Why should you try to make me as wretched as yourself?" I said, facing him.

"I don't try to do anything of the kind, and I mean to make you happy. And I know the case I put to you is an impossibility. For if Margaret is dishonored she is dead. That is how I feel about Margaret. But she is neither dead nor dishonored. She is waiting for you to come and marry her at the church in her native town. Cheer up, old fellow; but don't preach, don't lecture me—don't try to make a law for me you would not obey yourself."

Then we gradually simmered down into our previous condition of calm, and he talked of Sandwich, told me incidents of his intercourse with the vicar, and made a curious comparison between the vicar and Wilkess, contrasting their good qualities, and speculating as to what sort of a man the vicar would have been with Manwaring's training, and what Manwaring would have been in the vicar's shoes.

"I think it would be quite possible," he said, presently, "under certain circumstances, that I might come to love Sandwich as I think I did when I began to climb our garden wall to look over and see the river and the country beyond, when I went into the fields and gathered March marigolds, and, later in the year, meadow-sweet and 'trembling grass.'"

It occurred to me at that moment to tell him all about my visit to Sandwich, and to compare notes with him about that gloomy past which had so filled his mind as to set up a disease there, a morbid desire to usurp the judgment and work of Heaven—for so I *regarded his fell designs* upon Lucas. For the third or fourth time,

second thoughts checked my half-uttered words, and I merely said—

"Why did you change your name?"

"From George to Ned, from Newbolde to Drummond? Why, for the same reasons that he changed his from Chingford Lucas to Fitzherbert Willoughby. We have been in hiding—he from me, I from him. He would know I should be on his track; I was equally certain that he would steer clear of any fellow who called himself George Newbolde. Drummond was the name of an ancestor of my father's, and Edwin was my father's Christian name."

"Ah, George, if I had only the influence upon you that a brother might claim," I said, "what a happy future there might be in store for us. Have you never, in your wanderings, met some woman with whom you could pass your days? Have you never loved?"

"Yes, my father and his memory, my sister, you. Is there no love, think you, but the selfish love of man and woman? I love my Hate. An odd notion, is it not? You lovers of a pretty girl think yours is the only engrossing passion. Why, it is transient as the summer breeze compared with the miser's love of his gold, fleeting as a shadow compared with the unsatisfied yearning of a just hatred. Go to, as they say in the plays, thou hast no eloquence in thy tongue to thaw my frozen purpose. Let us to our affairs."

He separated the mining scrip into two bundles.

"There is your proportion of the Revenge Mine," he said, pushing one half toward me. "You can hold it, or let it be sold. And here are three thousand dollars in bills that shall represent your share of the current month's dividend, or what you will. Take them, partner, brother, don't be shame-faced, they are yours."

I hesitated.

"They have been well earned, honorably won, every share, every inch of land, every dollar I possess."

"I am sure of it; but not by me," I said.

"For her sake, then. You elected to marry her when you thought her a penniless girl, and a girl without a name; she is not penniless, she has a name. Take your share of the money she brings you—if not for your own sake, for hers."

I took up the money.

"The shares are payable to bearer," he said, "but first require my signature. I will deposit them for you in the bank at Leadville. I leave you to-day; this place may not be so safe when it is known

I am away, and even the stage by which you will travel to Leadville is not the safest of conveyances. At Leadville you can take a draft on London for all or part of the stock—they know its value. You could draw on the Revenge even at Chicago, new as is Drummond's Gulch, a mere mining camp, unrecorded on the maps."

We had hardly completed this division of property when a foxy-looking gentleman arrived, sat down at the table without ceremony, and produced three documents.

"Shall I read?"

"Yes, sir," said my partner.

The foxy gentleman read a brief, but explicit partnership deed, in which, for due consideration of services and relationship, I was installed as the partner of Richard Drummond, otherwise George Newbolde, in the Revenge, and other mining properties and lands in and about Drummond's Gulch.

"Your colored gentleman at home?" asked the lawyer.

"Wash!" shouted my partner.

"Yes, sah."

"Lawyer wants you."

"Yes, sah."

"Sign," said the lawyer, motioning to us; "and you, Wash, observe."

"Yes, sah."

We signed two of the documents.

"Now what is *your* name?"

"Washington Cæsar Lee," said the old darkey, grinning.

"Can you write?"

"No, massa, I can jest read de book of Genesis."

"Then make your mark here—that signifies you have seen these gentlemen sign these papers."

"Yes, sah."

Wash made his mark.

"This third document is only the draft; I take that to Denver; it goes into the archives; shall not be round here again for eight weeks; anything more?"

"No, sir."

"One hundred dollars."

"There you are," said my partner, handing him the money; "and keep this agreement for me in your safe with the draft. I'm *going to Europe; don't* know when I will return; but Washy stays

here and keeps house. Whenever you, or any other member of the firm, travel this way, call and see that Wash is all right, and make your headquarters here."

"Yes, sir; good-by, good luck," said the foxy gentleman, taking up his hat and bowing himself out.

"Business-like fellow—one of the traveling representatives of a great firm of mining lawyers at Denver, Leadville, and the newest of new cities—Jamaica," said my partner. "Take care of that deed; it will grow in value, grow day by day. When do you start for London? I advise your going at once. Washy!"

"Yes, sah."

"Take care of the hut."

"Yes, sah."

"I am off to Denver and Chicago, thence to Europe, not to be back for a long time. You know the sheriff?"

"Yes, sah."

"If you want advice or assistance of any kind go to him."

"Yes, sah."

"And if he can't do all you want, go to Joe Larkins."

"Yes, sah."

"And here is a letter."

"Yes, sah."

"This one with a cross in the corner—give it to the sheriff."

"Yes, sah."

"And this without a cross is for Joseph Larkins, manager of the Revenge."

"Yes, sah."

"Deliver them to-morrow."

"Yes, sah."

"Get me my belt and my repeater."

Washy brought a leather waist-band that was literally a purse, and a cartridge belt, and with it a Winchester rifle.

"And now go down to the camp; tell Lady Ann, with my respectful compliments—mind the respectful compliments, Washy."

"Yes, 'deed I will, sah."

"That I will thank her to have the snorter saddled and ready for me at ten o'clock—it is now nine—and the gray mare with Dick Ooley on her back, and tell him to have his shooting-irons in order."

"Yes, sah."

"Now listen, that is not all—then she can send up somebody

from the mine to carry my luggage down to 'The Castle,' and put it aboard the Leadville and Denver stage in the morning, checked for the bank at Leadville, do you understand?"

"Yes, sah."

"Then away you go."

And away Washy went as far as he could sither and slide down the mountain into the valley below.

"You could go by the same stage if you wished," he said, "but I would advise your taking the stage that goes to Leadville next Monday, four days hence, and ends its journey there. It is a well-appointed stage, and the baggage is checked for the cars. You get two or three hours in Leadville, time enough to see our friend Wilkess at the bank; he is away from Tombstone for a few days. Get your drafts on London, then a through ticket by the cars to Chicago, thence to New York, and then on for England, with your happiness all before you, a good mother and a good girl awaiting you. Yes, that is the stage for you to take. You can pack at your leisure, write letters home, and get there, perhaps, as soon as the mail. I go a somewhat different route, and if you go by to-morrow's stage, you may be in Leadville before the scrip. So Monday's stage be it, eh?"

"Yes, since that is your advice," I said.

"It is," he said; "and now, good-by!"

I looked at him reluctantly.

"Good-by, brother," he said, putting out his hand.

"It is so sudden," I replied.

"Better now than next week," he said, looking me straight in the eye, "for I am beginning to like you—to feel happy in your companionship."

"Then better next week than now," I said.

"No, no," he answered. "I have been waiting years for the message you brought me only a few days ago, and now it seems years since you brought it. I would not have believed it possible that I could have desired to postpone for one hour the work that lies before me; but this morning, looking at your amiable face, listening to your soothing views of life, thinking what pleasant chums we might be, now that I am no longer, nor shall ever be again, a slave to whisky, I wavered—I wavered, and said to myself, 'Oh, if it were possible to forget, if not to forgive, to forget, and—"

"*Surely,*" I exclaimed, "it was a good inspiration?"

"No, it was a touch of human infirmity—what you will. I have corrected it with a dose of the old memory. Once again I have traversed the road from the Sandwich Station to the old house, my hand in my father's; I have recalled his sweet words of hope, and seen all his awakened ambition blasted in that ruined home; I have seen the beloved but unfortunate dead, and heard the son promise to avenge the father. No, friend, brother, it may not be, that brief dream of companionship; I could not be happy even in the thought of it for more than a moment."

"Oh, if it were possible! Would to God he might be dead now!"

"No, he will live to meet me. There is a Providence doth shape our ends. Do you think you would have been sent out here merely to balk me at the last? Be reasonable, Hickory. There is a rosy future for you. Come here."

He led me to the door.

"There it is—right away over yonder where the sun rises—the bridge at Sandwich. You don't see it, but I do. I am standing there in the sunshine. I have seen the kind old vicar place Maggie's hand in yours, I have seen her beaming face, with her dead father's loving eyes; I can hear the wedding bells. And by all that is good and true, by your love for her, by her happiness, I claim the fulfillment of your pledge, as Fate claims the fulfillment of mine. Do you draw back?"

"No."

"I can trust you?"

"You can."

"I do."

I still wonder whether I ought to have accepted the situation. I look back and feel that I was powerless to resist it. He had a stronger personality, surely, than I. There was a magnetism in his individuality. He had the gift of command—I was as wax in his hands. He ordered, I obeyed. It would have been so had I been a hundred men, he one. It was so in the camp; he commanded, he was the chief, "the Boss of Drummond's Gulch."

"Good-by!" he said, "good-by, brother. Henceforth strangers for evermore. Think only of her; let me know and feel that she is happy, that the balance of her life shall atone for the misery of its beginning. That will make me happy—that, and—"

He paused and took my hand.

"But that is my affair; good-by."

He turned and waved his hand at the door, and was gone. I had not the heart to look out after him. I sat staring at the open door, and I saw the mountains away beyond the river. I sat as one in a dream, until the negro returned with two men from the camp, who carried away with them "de massa's baggage."

They trailed out with a heavy trunk between them.

I watched them as far as I could see them, picking their way down the rocky path among the trees.

It seemed to me as if they were carrying a coffin. I felt the tears welling up into my eyes, as they did when I followed my father to his grave.

The sun was shining, the world all about me looked lovely, but there was a great black shadow upon it.

At last the men with the coffin (I could only think of it, do what I would, as a coffin) disappeared, and I seemed to hear a funeral bell tolling in the distance. Then my troubled fancy conjured up the parson's words; I saw an open grave; I heard the emblems of mortality fall upon the coffin, and the words "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." I leaned against the door-post of the hut quite unmanned, and almost sobbed, "Good-by, dear friend—good-by, good-by!"

CHAPTER IX.

SIR THOMAS GOES OUT TO FIGHT THE INDIANS.

NOW that my host and benefactor had really gone, I felt as if he had died and I was in possession of his goods; as if I had been at the reading of a will, and had come into the property of a relative whom I loved. When I was a little fellow I lost a brother. We had been playmates. He was eight and I was ten. I could not realize that he was dead, and when I took his little treasures of toy soldiers and tin trumpets to my own room because he wished it in his dying moments, I felt as if I had stolen them. I never played with them any more, never blew another blast upon the tin trumpets.

The sensation of that long past came back to me now, and instead of packing my things to start away for England, I sat staring *at them, and feeling* toward some of them, and particularly in re-

spect of the money in my purse, as if I had come into a painful inheritance.

"Done take on so, Massa Maynard," said old Wash, putting his kind old woolly head in at the open door; "you's going home to your people."

"Yes, Wash, old fellow, but where is the boss going?"

"Not much long way; and he hab no people, I tink, only me."

He grinned at his own suggestion of relationship.

"He's a wanderer on the bressed earth; I heard him say so often; and once he right down told me he only hab two friends in de whole wide world—me and a ole parson. And dat once was not when he gotten drunk, but sick and sad as a ole doughnut. Ah! poor Massa Newbolde, I talk to him den, and say wonder he had not rest him faith in de Lord since he hab two such friends, me and de ole parson, both of which was ob de true faith. But he only smile at me and say dat de ignorance of some folk was more bressed in de result dan all de wisdom of de oders which was wise as Solomon."

"He was only angry and savage, then, when he had been drinking?"

"Dat's all; when he was sick and sorry, as he would say, den no pusson could be more gentle, no pusson could listen more solemner to de good Word than him, no pusson could smile more discredulos of it, though I would go on talking as I gib him his soup, or his toast, or his posset, or what not; and den when he gotten better and sat up, he would smoke and smoke, and tink and tink, wid his eyes looking out across de riber yonder, so that you'd tink he was trying to look right into dat bery heaven I don't believe he eber had de true faith in. 'It's nice, Washy,' he was once say, 'for you to believe in dem golden slippers and de golden stairs, and all dat;' and I said it was de only tink dere was to lib and die for. And he says, 'Is you happy, Washy?' and I says, 'Yes, wid a good massa, plenty to eat, and heaben at last, what could I want more?' And he said, 'Dat's right; I'm glad somebody's happy.' And I says right away, 'It's you as has made me so—you and de bressed Bible.'"

"You have had quite long conversations with him, then?"

"Oh, yes, and he has conversed wid me oderwise when he were on de bender; wid de whisky in him, he has talked to me wid de boot-jack and de fire-irons—yas, dat he hab, the dear, kind boss!"

At the recollection of which Washy shuffled away laughing, and left me to my reflections. My negro gossip had not coaxed them out of the channel in which they were drifting. And he talked of Dick more or less as if he were dead, and gave me glimpses of the pathetic side of the poor fellow's character—the poor fellow who had worked and fought and struggled that I might inherit his wealth.

"You will be rich," he had said, "rich!" I pulled myself together, tried to shake off my morbid thoughts, stopped looking back, got up, walked about, and looked into the future. I was already rich.

The idea staggered me. Rich! With money enough to travel *en prince*, with money enough to hire the captain's room on an Atlantic steamer, with money enough to marry my love straight away.

How I longed for a portrait of her! And how I wondered that I had none. We were too much in earnest, I suspect, to exchange portraits. Our hours were too deeply mortgaged with work and hope to be wasted in sitting for portraits. Her features were engraved on my heart; what did I want more?

His sister! I did not love her the less for that, but his story lent a mystery to our relations that seemed to shadow the brightness of her eyes. And she was not to know of the existence of this brother. I was never to mention him. She was to remain in ignorance of him and of all his kindness to me. I was not to tell her the story of my life and vows at Drummond's Gulch.

"Massa's very melancholy," said the old negro servant, returning. "Sometimes Massa Drummond read in his book, and dat cheer him."

"And sometimes he talked to you, and that cheered him, eh, Washy?"

"Can't begin to say if it cheered him," he replied, grinning.

"Anyhow, talk to me, Washy; come, sit down."

He hitched up his trousers and squatted upon a low stool.

"I'se melancholy, too," he said.

"About the boss going away?"

"Not all on dat account."

"But you are sorry he has gone?"

"Not like de sorry that comes ob parting for good until we *meets* again on de golden shore."

"*No, of course not.*"

"Massa Drummond come back again."

"I hope so."

"I know he come back."

"Why?"

"Hab he not tell me he come back, and gib me money and tell me take care of de house, and all dat; but some bosses dey go and neber come back no more."

I took this as a kindly tribute to myself.

"You are thinking of me; it is very good of you, Washy."

"Not dizactly, and yet dat's so," he said, in an embarrassed kind of way.

"How do you mean?"

"You not go away for eber."

"I shall not return to the Gulch," I said.

"Berry sorry you say so; no wish serve a kinder gentleman. Grief me say good-by, but grief me more if it was dat last parting, and only to meet again in de happy land. As I said befo', you return to yo' people ober de sea, and dey wait to welcome yo'—dat sweetheart and dat mother."

"Yes, thank God!" I said.

"Amen!" responded Washy.

"But I don't know what you are driving at."

"I was just driving at Sir Thomas," he said, rising, "since you fo'ce me to speak, and dat's de truth."

"What of Sir Thomas?"

"When I fust came to de door to speak it was 'bout Sir Thomas, only you look so melancholy I done like to say noting. Done like bring bad news when Massa's sad already at de begin with."

"What is it, Washy?"

"It's valor."

"Valor!"

"Dat's de word for it. Right down valor."

"Down at the 'Castle!'"

"Some of it."

"It's generally whisky there," I said; "but what is it?"

"Tain't whisky now," said Washy; "it's valor, sah. Nobody thought as Massa Thomas was brave—didn't look it, neider—but its valor as is de trouble; he's been and gone off wid Ugly Jim and Barkin' Billy and de rest to fight de Indians, and Lady Ann she is *dat feared, she goin' on* a-cryin' to dat extent it's miserable to see."

"To fight the Indians! Where? And why?"

"You hearn 'em down at de camp a talkin' of striking de eral treasures at de Ute Valley?"

"Yes."

"Well, 'pears as de Injuns come down on de pioneers and sacre dem, just as 'pears dey come down on Massa Drumm when he fust come dis side de Rockies; and Ugly Jim and a lc de Gulch men has gone out wid dere guns and things and a w ob tinned meat and bread and whisky, to settle de trouble wi Injuns for good, jest as Massa Drummond settled dem here a Gulch."

"Well?"

"'Tain't well, massa."

"I mean what more?"

"Ain't dat enough?"

"There is no news of them, then?"

"No."

"And you think the Indians will get the best of it?"

"Yes, sah."

"And that poor Sir Thomas will be killed, if he is not k already?"

"Dat's so," said Washy.

"Why?"

"Why do I think so? because I hab no faith in Ugly Jim, de whisky-drinkin' crowd dat fight for him. When de India de war-path he lie in de bush, he wait, he watch, he is cautio de ole bear, and secret and creep like de serpent. And what Gulch crowd dat go out? A noisy, drunken crew, loafers and sv ers, and de like of poor little Sir Thomas be no good to go on commons, and sleep in de bush, and wade through de ribers. good-by to de little boss of de 'Castle.'"

"But Mister Drummond, he fought the Indians when they on the war-path?"

"Ah, dat's bery different; they tole me, the ole fellers mine, dat in those days Boss Drummond he drink no whisk swear no oaths, he could break a rock wid his fist, and ride de est hoss dat ever was, and fight de biggest Injun that eber t scalp. Dey tole me he don't go out wid a cart and kitchen stuff *whisky in bottles* and whisky in de flask; he go out, and de ha *of de pioneers* wid him, he go out like de Injun scout himself,

out as keen and strong as any fighting Injun, and his men dat go wid him are silent men, wot do not talk and sing and shout, and dey wushipe de ground Boss Drummond walk on, and follow him, de ole men say, to hell if he lead; which was profane speaking, I allow, but it make de ignorant understand what men dem was, what a leader dey hab, and how poor de chance ob dem Injuns!"

"That is very true, Washy, and very well put."

"Yes, sah," he replied, "and dat's why I'se melancholy about de kind little Boss who will neber come back to de camp; I'se sure as if I see his scalp in de fighting Injun's belt."

I went down to the camp, and found that it was true what Washington said; Lady Ann was disconsolate.

"Yes," she said, "the boys have gone to punish the Utes, or whatever the red devils call themselves, and my poor fool of a Tommy has gone along. He'll get killed to a certainty."

She was sitting in a corner of the saloon. Two miners were playing roulette, two others betting in a languid kind of way. The place gave you the idea of suspense. It seemed as if it was waiting for something or somebody.

"And it will be two weeks before they can get back even if they lick the Indians, which they don't always do; and I shall be a widow as sure as my name is Lady Ann Montgomery! And that is my name. Poor fellow! My real own name; I'm a titled lady with the right to be stuck up among the best of the English aristocracy! And he's the only man I ever cared a red cent for—too good for me by a sight, but I've been true to him and stood by him, in sunshine and in storm, as they say, and I'd lay my life down for him if it would do him any good—and that's a fact."

"He will come home a hero, Lady Ann," I said; "never fear!"

"But I do fear, and I'm dead certain he won't come home a hero, and I don't care if he comes home to be called a coward so that he comes. It won't matter to you or to Boss Drummond, however," she said, suddenly changing her tone; "he's off for Europe, and you are going to-morrow, ain't you?"

"Yes," I said.

"And glad to shake the Gulch dust off your shoes, eh?"

"I have been very happy here," I said.

"And who's going to take care of me?" she said, "now all the braves have gone to fight the Indians? It's time I left this place, I think, unless we give consent for the boys to marry and bring their

wives. I did say that I would quit the moment another woman turned up here, but I guess I kinder long to see a woman's face to-day, that's a fact."

She sighed and cast a weary glance around, and I pitied her. A fine buxom woman; as I have said before, Lady Ann had had a "career," and a physiognomist could see the lines of it in her countenance. There were premature "crows' feet" about her dark eyes, a scar upon the left cheek, her mouth was too sensuous, though it was more generous than sensuous in its characteristics. Her hair was black with the slightest tinge of gray; her shoulders a trifle too high for gracefulness of carriage; and she had a habit of sitting in a huddled up kind of way that, to say the least, was not lady-like. Moreover, in the expression of her face, and in her general manner, there were tokens of a dormant temper, a possible rage, an unbounded courage, that in an emergency could do more than unpack itself in words. She had a powerful physique, and when she said, "I'd like to catch on to one of them Indians if anything happens to my Tommy," you fully realized that if she did it would go hard with the red man.

"I know he'll never come back," she said in a low voice, "because he went without telling me, he went and never said good-by with his own lips, not even a shake of the hand."

"That should be a good omen," I said.

"But it ain't; he knowed I would never have given my consent, and if I wouldn't, then you may be sure it was a dangerous business, because I'd have like to have him pleased, and if it were just going on a spree I guess he should have gone and had my blessing. Besides, he's left me a bit of paper and written on it, 'Good-by, Ann, my dear old girl, and lawful wife,' and signed his name in full, and what does he mean by that? Why, it's as plain to me as is the light of the Revenge smelter; he thinks he may never come back, and he wants me respected as his widow if I go to the old country to claim my rights. That's what the boy means. And they will have lured him to his death, the mean loafers. What can he do, camping out, laying around for Indians, and hasn't the strength of a baby if it comes to fighting a rainstorm, let alone Indians? By my soul, if he gets shot, I'll let daylight into Ugly Dick, and don't you forget it!"

"Don't look on the dark side of the picture," I said. "I have *known many an English* gentleman who did not look as if he had a

penn'orth of fight in him, nor a ha'porth of strength, who has astonished giants in the way of pluck and staying powers. In the English wars there have been boy-leaders of forlorn hopes, who have done greater deeds than the biggest and strongest of their followers."

"That's all right," said Lady Ann, wiping away her tears; "but don't I know my Tommy? Have I nursed him, and don't know how weak a case God has put a big heart into! Don't tell me he'll break down at the first trouble. He'll fight, oh, yes, that's the worst of it, and he won't run away, not he, bless the dear little feller's courage; but he can't sleep out o' nights, and get wet, and hot, and thirsty, and fatigued, and fight great hulking Indians, and come back; how can it be expected? If I'd that Ugly Jim by the throat, I'd give him a grip that would settle his Indian fighting for the rest of his whisky-tub life."

She cried with sorrow and with passion, with rage and fear, and then sat down and rocked herself to and fro, and taking my hand, said:

"Mister, you are a countryman of his; you are going to his native land; if you hear about him there, say a good word for him—the best fellow I ever knew, and the deadest at this moment, else why do I feel it here at my heart, and why do I wish for the first time that there was a woman in the camp, that I might tell her what I feel and think?"

"Cheer up," I said, "and never say die. It is your own motto; I have heard you use it. I believe he will come back, and come back a hero—the best and bravest of the lot."

"If he does," she said, "he will be all that, I know, and I will tell him what you said. Give me your hand, and let me thank you for your cheery words. I'll try to think as you say, and if the worst comes to the worst, I'll revenge him as sure as my name is, as I said before, Lady Ann Montgomery."

I could not help wondering what Mayfair would think of this latest addition by marriage to the English aristocracy.

"Let us drink to his good luck, and to his safe return," I said, placing upon the table a ten-dollar bill.

"Jim," said Lady Ann, "bottle of wine."

"Glasses for the gentlemen," I added, pointing to the other occupants of the saloon, who had just finished their game.

They came forward, joined in the toast, and Lady Ann did likewise.

I do not remember to have had any bad dreams since that night, some three years prior to this one, at Sandwich, after getting excited over George Newbolde's story. Whether it was the solemn hot supper which Lady Ann insisted I and three other guests should take with her at the 'Castle,' or the extra quantity of whisky I drank to soothe my thoughts; or whether it was the reflex of some serious thoughts that occurred to me while picking my way with a six-shooter in one hand and a dark lantern in the other to the hut at midnight, and being met with a "Tank de Lord" by Wash, who concluded that I had been shot or gone off after the Indians; why it was, I know not, but on that last night at the hut I had a dream of consecutive events that covered years. I was a boy, and lived at Sandwich; the vicar killed my sister; I was educated at an old house that was haunted; I grew up and fell in love with a girl, who on the day I was to be married turned out to be a ghoul; I ran off to Liverpool, got on board a ship bound for Drummond's Gulch, it landed me at the 'Castle,' and sailed away; and before it was well out of sight on the river of the Indian Valley, the red men fell upon us, Lady Ann saving my scalp at the risk of her own life, and as a reward demanding my hand in marriage, which accepting, I was raised to the peerage; and I awoke in the midst of a speech in which I was advocating the exclusion of the Bishops from the Upper House of Parliament.

When I had turned up the lamp, and convinced myself that I was really at Drummond's Gulch a free man, I began to ponder whether I had not better take the morning's stage, and begin my journey back to the regions of civilization at once. But on reflection I felt that I owed it to my host and benefactor to act upon his advice and wait. He might have some special reason for wishing me, as he evidently did, to take the stage four days hence.

Judging by his later movements, it formed part of his programme that I should wait.

By and by, when the sun made his glorious presence known behind the mountains in the east, flooding the sky with a golden glory, and presently adding deeper and more radiant tints to the shamrock, the maple, and the oak, I went out and saw the day break—the day which was indeed to separate me from George Newbolde, the founder of the town of Drummond's Gulch, for the remainder of our days, just as if we were really dead and buried.

"*To-morrow*, good-by; the next day, strangers."

The morrow in that account had come and gone; the next day in that account had arrived, and I began to try and wipe yesterday out of my memory.

CHAPTER X.

GOOD-BY TO DRUMMOND'S GULCH AND TO LADY ANN.

A STRANGE week, full of thoughts and fancies that "favored" George Newbolde, applying the word as nurses use it in regard to the likenesses between parents and children. A week of curious fancies and reflections, dominated by the spirit of my absent partner. I often seemed to be thinking as if my mental faculties had been inoculated with his ideas of things. His was clearly the stronger nature of the two. He had imbued my mind with his philosophy, if his speculations and opinions could be called philosophy.

Instead of looking at the world cheerfully, I had fits of gloom. Fortunately they were followed with happy thoughts of home, and Maggie, and Doughty Street, and the last time I saw my love.

But what had I to do with gloomy thoughts? The sun shone gloriously, and if a passing breath of September frost had painted a maple here and there, and bronzed a young oak, that only made the woods look more lovely.

The fluttering burr of the locust, and the occasional song of the hermit thrush, flattered the ear with summer sounds, and the katydids at eventide offered their monotonous music as lullabies to solemn memories.

It seemed a year this week; and yet how George Newbolde had watched the birth and death of days and weeks and months with a canker in his heart!

I think the poor woman down at the "Castle" (what unconscious satire on themselves, that name, seeing that the poor lost owner could date his origin back to lordly castles and rich domains!) made me miserable. She had sent out messengers away into the Elk mountains and beyond for news of the expedition against the Indians, and she waited for their return with a great fear in her heart. Strange that this woman, with a history that had trailed its skirts through the mud of western camps, and had careered through the

gambling saloons of San Francisco, should be whining over the absence of her boy lover.

The human heart is a strange mystery; the mind of woman a puzzle of curious moods and fancies. My lady of the Gulch was worn with fretting and with fear; and the revival, as it were, of her better nature, her original girlish purity, shall I say in her eyes, gave to her face a new expression. You could not help thinking as you looked at her that she had once been really beautiful; and you found yourself looking back to the day when she might have been the joy and pride of a happy home.

A strange, long, weary week, waiting for the Leadville stage.

Washington Cæsar Lee did all he could to minister to my comforts; and in the evening, when I smoked and took my coffee, he would come in and talk of the Gulch, of Massa Drummond, of Lady Ann, Sir Thomas, and "de good Lord." It steered my thoughts into stiffer grooves of faith than they had been of late inclined to keep, listening to the simple words of poor old Washy, who was on the most familiar and friendly terms with divine persons.

I wrote long letters to Maggie, and longer still to my mother. In addressing Maggie I always had a fear that somehow Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby would lay his hands upon my letters; so I inclosed special notes for her to my mother, and sent sweet messages that way as well; though I had misgivings even then that my mother might not see her.

After I had worried myself with possibilities for hours at a stretch, a successful effort to conjure up her face, and her trustful eyes as they looked at me when she and I parted two years ago, put me back into a cheerful frame of mind.

And then, going from one extreme to the other, I became hilarious over the reflection that I was rich; that my ambition to provide a cottage for Maggie in a London suburb, backed up with say two or three hundred pounds a year, was child's play to what I could do now. Where should we live? Not in Doughty Street. nor even in Mecklenburgh Square. My mother would live with us, We would have one of those fine houses in Park Lane. How would my mother like that? Perhaps I would go in for Parliament. No, I would not be ambitious, except in regard to the happiness of my wife and my mother.

At last the week was ended, the week that seemed a year; and *one bright September* morning I waved my hand from the stage in

token of a last adieu to Lady Ann (poor Lady Ann!) and her staff of bar clerks and hostlers. No news had come in from the avengers who had gone after the Utes into the Elk mountains, and the mining camp had more than a usually gloomy appearance. I think I felt sorry for everybody who had to stay there. The sky was blue, the atmosphere bright, the stars and stripes flew gayly above the "Castle," but I was looking far away to the green shores of England, and with the sad face of the landlady of the tavern in my mind, I could quite fancy that her United States banner might be half-masted on the morrow in honor of the rash little English lord and his comrades on the war-path.

I little thought that I too might be very nigh upon being a candidate for the aforesaid honor before many hours had passed.

CHAPTER XI.

"POOR HUMAN NATURE."

GOING from Drummond's Gulch to Leadville we had a stiff line of country, the danger of which can only be appreciated, I am told, by those who know the stage route from Leadville to Denver, which includes a mountain pass four or five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

"You don't know that route," said one of the passengers, a stout old gentleman from Boston, Massachusetts, as we were ascending a road cut round the edge of a spur of the western ridge of the Elk mountains, and dipping into a sudden corner of the Saguache range. "By gosh! this bit of road is a mosquito to an elephant compared with the pass of the Rockies by the coach road to Denver."

"I guess there are twists in this trail that lay over any coach road between here and Denver, or between Denver and Sante Fé," said the driver, who was sitting with his legs on the splash-board bar, the reins on the back of his team, that were climbing the road like mountain deer.

Presently the driver picked up his ribbons and sat erect, and we began to work along the edge of a precipice, and to disturb the

loose gravel on the mountain side of it, which was washed into the road by the drainage from the hills above.

Then we caught glimpses of the world below us, deep dips of rock, varied by the tops of giant trees, and suggestions of cataracts falling into mysterious valleys.

The Leadville stage was in construction something like the old English family carriage of a hundred years ago, in no respect like the coach of the period, and in no respect of the cut and build of any modern conveyance used in England, except carriages of state, or traveling carriages affected by county gentlemen who still talk of Waterloo and Wellington, of the peace of Amiens and the arch-tyrant Napoleon. There are such dear old fogies still in England, I believe. When I was a very little boy, I remember my father talking of such men, and he regularly attended an annual banquet of Waterloo veterans.

This coach, like others on these mountain-roads, was not unlike the semi-private stages belonging to express and railway companies that you see in New York streets to this day, taking travelers to the steamers, or to the hotels—handsome conveyances swung on leathern hinges, which accommodate the body of the coach to almost every possible kind of motion.

The passengers were only five: one was a lady who came from a station somewhere in the Rio Grande (she had traveled alone all the way from Sante Fé); another was a noisy Yankee speculator, Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler; a third was the stout individual from Boston; a fourth was a silent gentleman in a new tweed suit and a sombrero, who, as well as the others, was on board when the stage took me up at Drummond's Gulch.

Colonel Wheeler, who had the seat next the driver, exchanged it with me and sat inside to talk with the lady, and the stout gentleman from Boston was the only other outsider, occupying the other seat on the top.

"The Utes," said my fellow-outsider, in response to a question, "number about twenty-five thousand; they are stronger than their neighbors on the plains, the Arapahoes, Cheyennes, and Sioux, with whom they are constantly at war in a small ten cent kind of way. They are at peace with us? Oh, I guess so; they have a handsome reservation. Urry, their chief, is a sensible Indian, and keeps his people in good shape. At both Leadville and Denver *you will see Utes in* the cities trading or loafing. A few years ago

there were occasional outbreaks; there was a massacre of whites at Drummond's Gulch, but whether by Utes or Cheyennes is doubtful. You say that a few weeks ago there has been a massacre in the Elk mountains; I guess that is quite possible—may be a case of reprisals; Indian fighting will always be going on, more or less, as prospectors push their way West. Why, it is only a few years ago that they ranged all over this grand auriferous region, some of them without ever having seen a white man. 'The Gunnison country, two days behind us, and far better known to-day than the region about Drummond's Gulch in the Elk mountains, was one vast Indian camp in my time. Why, my dear sir, the Gunnison district, not to mention the newer country of the Gulch, was only comparatively a few years ago unknown even to the people of Colorado themselves. Think of it, now, if you want to understand the progress of this new world, for, great Scott!" (this was his strongest oath) "it is a new world to us who live in America—new to old England; well, I expect so. Just think of it. Except a few daring trappers, there were no white settlers between the Missouri River and the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas until the Mormons migrated to Salt Lake in 1846, and then all this lovely Colorado—the land of the gold-seeker, the silver-miner, the rancher, and the consumptive in search of the greatest of all treasures, health—was the abode of the Indian."

"All Colorado, Gunnison, Leadville, Denver included?" I asked.

"All," he said, suddenly pausing to hold on to his seat while we jerked round an ugly bend of the road; "all, and more. It was only in 1853 that Lieutenant Gunnison, of the regular United States Army, was sent with a small force to explore the Rocky Mountain country. He was killed by the Indians, and it is after him the Gunnison River is named. In 1861, prospectors penetrating to this region were massacred by the score. Why, great Scott! is not the scene of one of those affairs on the Taylor River called Deadman's Gulch to this day?"

"Guess that's so, and there's another of 'em down yonder," said the driver, jerking his thumb toward a stretch of pines that shut out the land below us.

"In 1870," continued my well-informed companion, "a regular exploring association went right through the western slopes of the Elk mountains, in the Ute Indian reservation."

"Beg pardon," I said, "for interrupting you, but have the Indians reservation lands there now?"

"Well, I guess so; they had, and I don't know that they have sold it."

"Then miners from Drummond's Gulch, or whites from anywhere for that matter, have no right to go prospecting, making claims, and settling there?"

"None whatever."

"Would the Indians attack them?"

"I guess so, especially if they were in numbers, as they would be, and more especially still if the whites were arrogant, and aggressive, and insolent, not to say brutal, as some whites undoubtedly are. What do say, judge?"

"You bet, general!" was the driver's reply.

"Poor little wasted English baronet!" I said to myself; "poor waif of society! Ann of San Francisco, with her remnant of heart beating a tattoo of fear in response to her newly-born sensibilities that are strangely at variance with her fly-blown reputation—poor human nature!"

"Those prospectors were at work off and on for five years," continued the general (the title, as was the driver's when addressed as "Judge," was complimentary), "and they built a fort for refuge in case of assault by Indians; but in 1874 the Utes drove the occupants out and burned their camp. Our white fellow-citizens had to travel on foot over a hundred miles to the nearest station. Why, great Scott! only four years ago—1877—Gunnison country was set off from the lake, and now there is a city called Gunnison, with three or four thousand people. This is September, 1881, and I'll bet my bottom dollar that five years from now it boasts a population of fifteen or twenty thousand, eh, judge?"

"You bet, general!" answered the driver, at the same moment pulling up his team; "guess we'll breathe a spell; we're at the top, gentlemen."

"Which reminds me," said the Boston gentleman, "of a similar remark made by the conductor of a down-town elevator in New York; it was made to a stranger who hadn't been there before. 'This is the top; don't you want to get out?' 'I don't know,' said the stranger, 'I want to go to a hundred and twenty-first street.' The elevator shot down right away to the street, and says the boy, '*You get!*'"

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRE-EATING COLONEL AND THE GENTLEMAN FROM BOSTON.

WE had pulled up on an open plateau, from which we could see sections of the road we had traversed, and glimpses of the steep we had yet to descend.

The inside passengers stepped out, Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler handing down the coach steps the lady from Sante Fé, the silent gentleman in the sombrero lighting a fresh cigar as he followed, stretching his legs as if they were cramped and their owner already tired of the journey. He pulled his great hat over his eyes and stalked up to the horses. As he passed me I thought his clean-shaven face remarkable (he had a strong lower jaw), and it occurred to me that I had seen him before. He had something of the figure of George Newbolde, but lacked his easy walk, his broad shoulders, the swing there was in George's gait, and he seemed taller than George. Who was he? And where had I seen him? I had surely met him before, and under impressive circumstances.

The driver drew a bucket from the boot of the coach, the man in the sombrero stopped him and took it from him.

"I'll get the water, you rub 'em down," he said, and it seemed to me as if the voice was familiar to me.

"That's right down civil," said the judge, producing a large sponge and proceeding to rub down his team.

The passenger in the sombrero watered them, and while he did so exchanged drinks from a capacious flask with the driver. Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler, the general, the lady and myself, sat upon a log, smoked (the lady ate crackers and sipped some of the colonel's champagne) and chatted.

"It ain't Indians we've got to fear," said the colonel, "by a long sight, nor road agents if you come to fear, though they are the curse of this great and glorious and auriferous country."

"Road agents?" I said, interrogatively.

"Highwaymen, in your vernacular," said the Boston gentleman; "beg the colonel's pardon for interrupting him, our young friend is a Britisher."

"Then here's to the old country, and may her capitalists never want to buy a mine, nor a ranch, that the auriferous and agricultural West can not accommodate them with!"

He tossed off a horn of champagne, handed the bottle to me, I responded with "Here's to the everlasting friendship of America and England."

The lady smiled approvingly.

"Good for you," said the colonel.

"A sentiment of which we can all approve," said the Boston gentleman.

Then turning to the colonel, he said:

"You are interested in mining and ranching, I conclude, major?"

"*Colonel*," said the person addressed; "Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler of the United States Army, sir, with your permission, owner of the biggest thing in silver mines, and the allfiredest boss ranch in Colorado; the Cormstock ain't in it with the White Canon Wheeler mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills of Bible history are equally out of it with the Col. Malleson Ranch of Southern Colorado Plains."

"Never heard of that particular mine," said the Boston gentleman, puffing a little with the exertion of drawing the cork of a bottle of "Old Rye."

"Heard of the ranch?" asked the colonel.

"No, sir."

"Well, you will hear of both, I guess; they will each be stocked within twenty days for five millions; mouths are watering for 'em in Wall Street at this moment."

"Wall Street has a capacious maw," said Boston.

"A what, sir?"

"Maw, colonel, maw!"

"I don't understand Injun."

"Maw is English," said the Bostonian.

"But we were talking of road agents," I said, before the colonel could reply.

My interruption was intended to be pacific; for I saw that the Bostonian's coolness irritated the other gentleman, who had the air and manner of a fire-eater, and I was not desirous to assist at a fight. Moreover, I rather liked the Bostonian, and feared he might *get the worst of* an encounter with the colonel, whose bushy red

mustache and pinky eyes, if they did not denote courage, certainly suggested a cruel nature.

"Yes," said the lady, "there's no necessity to have a wrangle about languages, I hope, but the colonel is just a little high-handed."

"Not in the presence of a lady, I hope," he said, with a flourish of his very military-looking right arm, and a bend of his soldier-like head. "Let me see, was I about to tell you an incident of this very road? I was. Well, one day last year," said the colonel, "we had fun with a tenderfoot on this very Leadville stage; we'd a tenderfoot on board—"

"A greenhorn," interpolated the Boston gentleman, in a whisper intended for me.

"I said a tenderfoot," remarked the colonel.

"And you are right, I am sure," said the general.

"Well, this tenderfoot," went on the colonel, "was a bit skeared at something as was said about road agents, and a bummer from Denver, he remarked to me, 'This is a favorite bit of country for road agents.'

"'It is,' I answered, at the same time examining my pistols.

"'What!' exclaimed the tenderfoot, 'you don't ever get attacked, do you?'

"'Oh, yes; are you afraid?' I said.

"'Horribly,' he said.

"'Where's your shooting-irons?' asked the bummer.

"'I don't carry any,' he answered.

"'Then, by thunder, you'd best get into the baggage rack and under the tarpauling until we are round the Robber's Bend; it ain't no good us being encumbered with non-combatants,' said the bummer.

"And, would you believe it," went on the colonel, "we induced him to get into the rack under the baggage flap, and a few minutes afterward the bummer shouted, 'By thunder, here they come!' then another passenger, entering into the fun, shouted, 'Stand! Halt!' and then crack, crack, crack, went the bummer's revolver, and bang went mine, amid shouts of 'Take that, you horse-thief!' and 'There's a plug for you!' and no end of a racket, which we followed up by a shout of victory, and then we let Mr. Tenderfoot out. At Denver he insisted on ordering wine for the entire party, and he was such an all-fired good feller, that I could not part with him without telling him how he'd been sold."

"You told him because he was a good fellow?" I asked.

"I guess so, young man," said the colonel; "you wouldn't have me let him go without making the deal square?"

"Well, I don't think I would have told the poor fellow what a fool he had been," I said.

"You don't believe in confessing to a bluff?" said the colonel.

"Your little joke," said the Boston gentleman, without waiting for me to reply to the colonel, who was evidently inclined to resent my criticism of his story, "reminds me of the adventure of the Mammoth Cave stage, and I was in Kentucky at the time, for I am what you, sir, irreverently call a bummer."

"I apologize, general," said Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler, rising from the log, taking off his hat, and disclosing a closely cropped head of red hair.

"Not necessary," said the Boston gentleman, "but I thank you all the same, nor am I a general. My name is Johnson, and I represent the great house of Johnson & Brothers, of Boston. Our English friend may as well be informed that in America commercial travelers are called—and, I repeat it, irreverently—bummers. Mr. Charles Dickens—and I had the honor of knowing him in this country—sometimes called them bagmen, though some of his best writing was in certain essays he wrote under the title of 'The Non-Commercial Traveler.'"

"I think the 'Luck of Roaring Camp' is his best," said the lady.

"Then best it is!" said the colonel.

"I would not like to alarm you, madam," observed the Boston gentleman, "and may therefore as well tell you there are no road agents on this road."

"I ain't afraid of road agents," she said; "they don't hurt ladies."

"That's so," said the colonel, "which being understood, let me say there *are* agents on this road, quite frequent, and detectives too, and that feller who prefers the society of the driver to ours is either one or the other—which of the two time will tell."

"He's no road agent," said the Boston gentleman.

"For how much?" said the colonel.

"I won't bet on it," said the other.

"Then I'll go you five dollars he's a detective."

"Very well," said the Boston gentleman; "anything to make *things pleasant.*"

"How will we decide it?" asked the colonel.

"Ask him the question," said the Boston gentleman.

"Not me," said the colonel; "don't want a row in presence of a lady."

"I'll ask him," said the lady; "he has excited my curiosity, and I would like to know."

She rose from her seat. The stranger was talking with the driver. They were beyond earshot—and pistol-shot too, for that matter—so we could not hear what the lady said. We saw her address him: we saw him lift his sombrero, and the next minute madam returned and reseated herself on the log. This was her report:

"'There is a bet about you,' I said, 'but the gentlemen think you might not take it as polite if they asked you the question that is necessary to decide it.' He raised his hat, but did not speak. 'Are you a road agent or a detective?' I said. 'I don't know,' he replied; 'tell the gentlemen when I have settled which it is I'll let them know.'"

"Oh, that's the sort of feller he is," said the colonel. "I'd just like to make him waltz on his ear, and I would if there was no lady present."

Madam smiled as much as to say, "Don't mind me;" but as she did not say it the fire-eating colonel was satisfied.

"Shall we wait for his explanation, or draw the bet?" asked Mr. Johnson.

"Oh, draw it, and I'll match you for the five dollars," said the colonel.

"I don't gamble," said the Boston gentleman; "let the bet stand; guess I'm interested now."

"You were going to tell me something about Kentucky, sir," the lady observed, looking at Mr. Johnson.

"Have you ever been to the Mammoth Caves in Kentucky?" he asked, comprehending in his glance the entire company.

"No," we all replied.

"Considering your figure," said the colonel, "you have considerably spread yourself over this country."

"Yes," was the reply, "I have traveled, and I grow fat; you have not traveled, and you do not grow fat, colonel."

"How do you mean?" answered the colonel. "By thunder! if I thought—"

"But you don't," interrupted the gentleman from Boston.

"Don't what?" demanded the colonel.

"Think," said the other, and with an unmistakable sneer on his otherwise genial face.

"By thunder, general!" exclaimed the colonel, "if there warn't a lady present—"

"Oh, don't mind me," said the lady, calmly.

"But I do, madam, I do; never shall it be said that an American officer lowered his manhood, and forgot the chivalry that is due to the sex of his sacred mother, to brawl in presence of a lady."

"Do you know, colonel," said the stout gentleman from Boston, "you remind me of an entirely different story from that I was about to tell you; and with madam's permission I will narrate it."

"By thunder, sir—" began the colonel.

"Yes, we know, but not now—S. Y. L., as they say in New York," said the Boston gentleman.

"What does that mean?" asked the lady.

"See you later," he replied.

"Then tell us that other story," said the lady. "Sit down, colonel, and don't interrupt the general."

"It is for you to command," said the colonel, taking his seat.

"When the colonel interrupted me, madam, I was about to tell you the particulars of the last great stage robbery by the notorious James boys, but after his interruption I thought I would tell you about the native Nevadian and the Jersey sign-painter, which involves a lesson against braggadocio and blowing and pretending to be a fighter and a bear-killer, an officer in the army and a blood-and-thunder brave; but I guess the colonel mightn't like it, and as we don't want to disturb the harmony of the trip, we will leave parables and fables and moral lessons alone; what do you say, madam?"

"That's as you please," said the lady.

"No, as you please," interrupted the fire-eating colonel; "let him try to lay over that who dares."

The lady smiled, and said, "You have the floor, General Johnson."

"In September last year," said the general, "the James brothers performed their last remarkable operation in the way of stage robbery—the exact date was September 3; the Concord Cave coach was on its way from the depot of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to Cave City—only a distance of eight miles. The passengers

were seven gentlemen and one lady. In the shadow of a wood two men on horseback suddenly appeared, and before there was time to wink, 'Halt!' they cried, and four pistol barrels covered the stage. The driver had met Frank James before, and in the interest of himself and his passengers advised immediate surrender, and you may bet your bottom dollar he was right. The passengers were commanded to hold up their hands and step into the road, which they did, a certain journalist of Milwaukee slipping his watch and pocket-book under the cushion of the coach as he left. The lady was allowed to keep her seat. 'We don't tax ladies,' said James. While he stood over the passengers with a pair of six-shooters, his fellow-robber, Cummings, went through them and collected over one thousand dollars; then the contributors were ordered to get into the coach again, and the driver was requested to go ahead, which he did."

"And do you mean to say they made no fight of it at all?" asked the colonel.

"Nary a fight," said the Boston gentleman.

"By thunder, gentlemen, neither the James boys nor any other boys would have waltzed out of that affair if I had been one of the company—no, sirree, I should illuminate," said the colonel.

"You would have shot the pair of them, would you not, colonel?" said the lady.

"Thank you, madam, for your good opinion," said the colonel, rising from the log, buttoning his frock coat across his manly breast, drawing himself up to his full height, and scowling at the stout representative of trade and commerce from Boston.

"I'm not a bit frightened," said the New Englander, smiling at me and offering me his flask.

"Glad to hear it," said the driver of the stage, who had sauntered up to us to report that he was about to start, "darned glad; party of Injuns on the war-path a-coming down on us round the bluff yonder!"

"What!" screamed the colonel, not attempting to disguise his terror; "Indians—and on the war-path? By thunder, then, we're lost!"

"Not quite," said the driver.

CHAPTER XIII.

"OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE."

BY the time the Indian horsemen had drawn up in a picturesque group on the plateau nearest the open country, on our left, Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler had disappeared.

Whether he had retired to offer up a prayer for the general safety of all of us, or to see that his weapons were in order, is a question which he may be asked later; but when we drew near the Utes to palaver he was missing.

Six Ute warriors in full Indian bravery, three armed with rifles, three with bows and arrows, the advance guard of how many more there was no saying, reined their wiry ponies into a flourish of horsemanship, in response to the signal of the driver's raised open right hand, and then dismounted.

The spokesman of the party addressed the driver, the driver spoke in response; I question if either of them knew much of what either of them said; but presently the driver turned away, to take a parcel from beneath his seat on the coach. He produced a packet of tobacco, and dividing two plugs of cavendish between the party, the interview ended, and they galloped off.

"Why did you say they were on the war-path?" asked the colonel, now appearing on the scene, with a revolver in each hand.

"Want another pow-wow? They're five hundred strong in the valley," said the driver, winking at the silent gentleman in the sombrero.

"Jerusalem, oh no!" said the colonel. "Wouldn't mind undertaking the little party was here just now, but five hundred, no, sir, drive on!"

The colonel handed the lady into the coach, the silent traveler followed; the driver climbed into his seat, I into mine, and my fellow-outsider into his, and away we went.

"Injuns come from Denver," said the driver, "to see great white chief, who wants to deal for land; jest said they was on the war-path to startle yonder cyote of a bogus colonel."

"Do you know him, judge?"

"*No, sir.*"

"*Seen him before?*"

"Guess I have; but can't place him."

"What should you guess his profession to be?"

"Faro bank."

"Should think he keeps a bank?"

"Waal, yes."

"I wouldn't give him so good a show; I've known quite a respectable feller bossing a faro bank. Colonel Jasper at Denver considers himself as high-toned a sport as there is in the United States—dresses well, lives well, smokes the finest cigars that Havana produces; and is mighty good to his mother and sister, who live in Boston, Massachusetts."

"You know Denver well?" I asked my fellow-passenger; the driver now confining all his attention to his team.

"Yes," said the Bostonian; "knew it before the locomotive civilized it, and that's only the other day; I knew it, sir, when it was the merest camp, less of a camp than Drummond's Gulch. Denver! Why, it seems to me as if the whole of Colorado was only discovered yesterday, not to mention the cities at all. Did you ever hear tell of the Minnesota massacre? Well, right on top of that followed the Indian panic at Denver. The whole city, man, woman, and child, armed itself, and expected to be scalped. There was a road station called the Cut Off, not a day's ride from Denver. Two families of Germans kept it, and they sold whisky to the Indians—a crime I tell you on the frontiers in those days. Well, right in the midst of the Indian scare, a mule-train driver came into Denver and reported the bodies of the Germans at the Cut Off all dead and mutilated, scalped and done for in a terrible way. You bet that was enough. Denver went wild with panic. I was there, I repeat, and saw it; the whole place turned out into the streets, men cursing, women crying. Major Campion, a United States Staff Officer, was encamped outside the city, and he came riding in trying to reassure the people; but it was weeks before they got over it; and now, why bless us all, it is a great city, and you will see swell Indians assuming the airs of civilization at the leading hotels."

"It is difficult for an Englishman to realize these sudden and mighty changes," I said. "You are a great traveler and an observer of men; now, what would you take the gentleman in the sombrero for?"

"Our *third inside* fellow-passenger? Oh, he may be the owner

of a ranch, the boss of a silver mine hereabouts, an army officer from a frontier station on the plains—"

"You don't think he is an Englishman?"

"I am sure he is an American, and a typical American; look at his face, his build, his mustache, his free, easy style, and see how reticent he is."

"You think reticence a characteristic of Americans?"

"Don't judge us by me," he replied, smiling; "I am talking because you are seeking for information. Don't judge us by that bogus colonel; he talks to hide his character; some people use religion as a cloak; he tries to disguise himself with his tongue. We shall know something about the real character of the colonel before we have done with him."

"Shall we know more of the man in the sombrero?"

"I guess not."

"Do you think he is a detective?"

"No; and if we do learn any more about him it will be when he gets even with his fellow-travelers—or one of them—for the impertinent bet that he is either a road agent or a detective. But I was kinder forced into that—wasn't thinking about what I was doing. When I make a mistake, however, I can apologize like a man; and when some other feller makes a mistake I can fight. My figure offers too big a mark for an enemy: so if there is any shooting to be done, I make a point of getting the drop on the other feller. And then—well, I don't shoot, and so convert an enemy into a friend."

"Hey! hey!" and a crack of the driver's whip drew our attention to the judge and his team.

"A stiff descent before us, and nasty," said the Bostonian, as we caught glimpses of the road winding for a mile or two below, and debouching upon a plain darkened here and there with tracts of scrub and jungle.

"You bet," said the driver, slipping his drag bar and pressing it down tightly, and then carefully gathering up his reins.

"Not so steep as the pass between Leadville and Denver," said the Boston gentleman.

"Steep enough," said the driver. "Jim Carter let his coach go over at the bend yonder—very dry weather, no hold for the near-side wheels. Jim unhitched the team and jumped."

"*The coward!*" exclaimed the Boston gentleman.

"How many passengers?"

"Six."

"All killed?"

"All but two—lamed for life. Jim went home with his horses, fine team—owner rewarded him; but Jim don't drive no more coaches."

My fellow-outsider explained to me that all the stages traversing these mountain roads have a mechanical arrangement, whereby the driver can in a moment free his team from the coach, so that in case it goes over a precipice the team can be saved.

"A smart driver," he said, "can jump at the same moment, and has done so successfully more than once, when all might have been saved had he stuck to his coach as a captain sticks to his ship."

"Life is sweet," said the driver.

He was a hard-looking, weather-beaten man, with a ragged black beard, long black hair, shaggy eyebrows, and hands the color of mahogany. He wore a sombrero, that was now flying back in the breeze the coach itself made, as it began to go sliding down the road, lurching as it went, tossing now and then like a boat, and giving us ugly peeps of the precipices which we literally skirted, within two or three feet, as it seemed, of their awful edges.

The horses had climbed upward I said like stags, clutching the loose gravel with their feet; so now did they scamper downward, backing, as it were, as they stepped, and keeping well to the left of the road, where rocky and wooded heights towered above us gradually shutting out the sun, water-washings making now and then deep ruts into which, as it seemed to me, if our near-side wheels had not plunged at fortunate moments, we must have gone over on the other side to certain destruction.

The driver now and then spoke to his horses, once or twice he touched the leaders with his whip as if to guide rather than to urge them on, or rebuke them. They responded by clinging closer to the right side of the road, hugging the rocks, as a boat the shore.

Suddenly the coach gave a great lurch forward, and a hot, quick curse hissed through the driver's lips.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed my fellow-outsider right in my ear, as he leaned over toward the left, away from the yawning gulfs on our right, "get ready to jump."

From a sharp run, the team now rushed into a gallop, the coach

pressing upon the shaft-horses, so that they were half hidden beneath us. There was a dead silence, except for the grinding of the wheels and the clatter of the horses. Rocks and trees flew past us on our right. On our left, steep, rocky declivities yawned for us, and thrust up now and then the tops of pine trees, as if to pull us down.

You know how, when steaming up the Hudson River from New York to West Point, you see your way blocked by some mighty wood-crowned cliff, and if it is your first trip, you wonder for a moment if the boat is going headlong into it, when you find her steering sharp round into a new reach of river; know how you hold your breath when shooting the famous rapids of the St. Lawrence; you know what it is to take your first excursion on a toboggan; perhaps you know what it is to rein up your horse on the prairie, in front of a driven herd of buffaloes, trusting to your rifle to fetch down the foremost and thus divide the living avalanche. I once leaped into a blanket from a burning hotel, with certain death before me if I did not leap, and almost as certain if I did; but I never experienced so frozen a sense of terror, as when suddenly realizing that our brakes had given way on this mountain road, and that we were rushing down to a point where the rocks seemed to block the way, as the cliffs do on the Hudson.

The road appeared to narrow to a mere bridle-path, and at the point to all but disappear; and it was there Jim Carter had jumped! But, great heavens! where could he jump? The only chance, it seemed to me, would be to leap at the face of the rock, and cling to the scrubby bits of dwarf trees that hung there as if with difficulty.

The wheels of the coach no longer ground in the gravel. The noise of the flying team was like the rush of falling waters. We were on a bit of good road, the better for quickening our speed and hurling us into the rocky bed of the river that now flashed in the cañon below us.

I clung to my seat, leaning toward the rocks, the warning to be prepared to jump unheeded. To have stood up probably meant being pitched over. I held my breath, and uttered a mental prayer —"God have mercy!" My companion was evidently bracing himself for a leap; I felt him moving, I heard him breathing. The *driver sat as firm* as the rock in his path.

Suddenly the driver rose. It flashed through my mind like a

death sentence, "He's going to unhitch the horses and jump!" I clung to my seat, my eyes fixed upon him. He fascinated me. His sombrero, which had been fastened by a ribbon under his chin, had blown back, and was fixed like a halo around his tanned face.

"Hey! hey! what, Nancy Bell!" he shouted, and slewing the reins to the left with both hands, he faced the point.

"Hey! hey!" he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper.

The coach lurched first to the left, then swung to the right, the rock seemed to recede, and with another, "Hey, Nancy, hey!" we were round the point, and rushing forward for a long level stretch of road bordered by jungle and scrub.

We pulled up at last, the horses steaming; indeed, you could hardly see them for smoke. The driver flung the ribbons upon their backs, and jumped from his seat. We slid to the road, I and the gentleman from Boston. The colonel, with an ashen-gray face, handed out the lady in a limp kind of manner, the silent passenger following.

"Say, old man!" exclaimed the stranger in the sombrero; "you are an honor to your flag and to your country."

"That is a fact," said the Bostonian; "shake."

The driver stood looking at his team. He put out his hand mechanically to the stout gentleman, who shook it and handed it on, as I may say.

I shook it. The man in the sombrero shook it. The lady shook it, and the pompous person in the semi-military coat would have shaken it, but, almost at the moment of contact, the judge put his hand into his coat pocket, pulled out a yard or two of handkerchief, and mopped his face.

"Nary a better team between Denver and Texas," he said; "ain't it, Nancy Bell?"

The right hand leader put back the ear nearest the judge as he spoke to her. He walked up and patted her.

"I value my life," said the stranger, taking out his pocket-book, "at several hundred thousand dollars; here's five hundred on account."

He offered a handful of bills to the driver.

"Are you too proud to take it?"

"I guess not," said the judge, receiving it.

"You might have switched us off and jumped at the rock," said the stranger.

"Waal, guess I might," said the driver, smiling and thrusting the bills into an empty pistol pocket.

The stranger fascinated me. He was certainly speaking in an assumed voice, I felt sure of it. Once I could have sworn he was George Newbolde. But my partner had ridden to Leadville last week, to prepare the way for my arrival there, and was bound thence to Chicago. I thought as I passed him I would test his identity by whispering, "George, I know you, why cut me?"

He turned round, and with his calm eyes resting on me, said, "Did you speak to me?"

"Yes," I said, "I thought we had met before."

"Then which do you bet I am," he replied; "detective or road agent?"

"Neither," I said; "if I bet I would back you are a gentleman."

"Anyhow," said the stranger, "I guess you're a cussed inquisitive lot."

Then suddenly changing his manner, he said—

"Do you join the subscription for the man who has saved our necks?"

"Yes, with pleasure," I said.

"Hand over, then."

I gave him a hundred dollars, the Boston gentleman fifty, the lady ten, and the colonel, very ostentatiously handling a silver-bound pocket-book, produced fifty dollars.

"I think as Christian gentlemen we might, one and all, offer up a prayer of thankfulness to the Throne of Grace," he said, "for not alone by his own volition has this man saved our lives."

"Who do you call 'this man'?" asked the driver, turning upon him, as well he might, for there was a tone and air of superiority and patronage in the colonel's manner at this moment that might have irritated the humblest-minded person.

"You, my friend," was the cool reply.

"I ain't no friend of yours," said the driver, "and you jest take your counterfeit bills, I don't want 'em!"

Flinging the colonel's money upon the ground, the irate driver little knew how hard and direct a blow he had struck the pretender.

"Counterfeit!" exclaimed the colonel; "what do you mean, sir?"

"He don't mean counterfeit bills, I guess," said the Boston gentleman, as the driver turned away, "so much as counterfeit generosity."

"Then a man should say what he means—look at them bills, sir."

"Take 'em, judge," said the Boston gentleman.

"Not me," was the reply.

"*I'll take 'em!*" suddenly exclaimed a new and unfamiliar voice, amidst a sudden clatter of horses' hoofs; "*throw up your hands, right away!*"

We did, the colonel trembling from head to foot.

It was useless to resist. Two horsemen dominated us. They "had the drop on us" with four six-shooter barrels.

Lying in ambush, they had sprung upon us at the most unguarded moment of our trip.

"I'll let daylight into the man that moves!" said the spokesman of the ugly pair, dismounting.

"You've got the drop on us," said the silent man, as the road agent "went through him," that is, emptied his pockets; "but where's your masks—ain't you afraid we'll know ye agin?"

Still the same apparently assumed voice, still the thought that we had met, and that he avoided me.

"Great Father in Heaven!" exclaimed the colonel, "don't irritate the gentleman, they are welcome to all I've got; men must live!"

"Right, old loafer," said the highwayman, taking from the colonel a very pretty pair of six-shooters and stuffing them into his belt.

"The bill the coon guv you who thinks he may know us again," he said to the driver, "where is it?"

"Under his foot," said the colonel; "why, oh why, make this interview longer than necessary?"

"You coward!" said the lady passenger, turning upon him; "I wish I'd had your pistols, I'd have talked to the scoundrels!"

"Good for you, old woman!" said the thief, rapidly transferring our property to his own pockets, and strapping about his waist—alas!—my well-packed belt of bills and gold.

"Old what!" she screamed.

"Stop your music, or hand over your watch and pocketbook," said the agent. "Can't spare 'em, eh? well, keep 'em to buy a tin

trumpet and a popgun for Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler. And don't you forget it!"

"Great Father!" exclaimed the colonel, "he knows me."

CHAPTER XIV.

"DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND."

BY this time the ruffian had remounted his horse.

"Stand where you are ten minutes—as near as you can guess it, and then drive on as if h— was behind you," he said, and they disappeared into the bush.

"Wasn't that a carbine I saw in the boot?" asked the passenger in the sombrero.

"Yes," said the driver.

"Keep your eye on their track—there's an open space a little way in the bush, and a path that leads to the river, I know it—keep your eye on the trees at the bend of the road."

As he spoke he crouched within the shadow of the still steaming horses, and creeping up to the coach, put his hand into the boot and pulled out the carbine.

"See 'em still?" he asked.

"Disappeared by them trees at the bend," said the driver.

"A Winchester?" asked the stranger.

"Yes."

"Loaded?"

"To the muzzle—seventeen shots."

The stranger crept into the bush.

"Now take your seats," he said; "drive on slowly—they'll watch until you move—wait for me when you're out of sight of the clump of trees—don't question me, don't follow me."

"I bet you he was a detective, didn't I?" said the colonel, turning to the gentleman from Boston.

"I'll knock your eye out, you tarnation born son of a cyote!" said the driver, "if you don't take the back seat you had just now."

"*I'll report you* to the company for incivility," said the colonel.

"Now then," said the driver, his eyes still on the point of observation indicated by the scout with the carbine, "all aboard!"

As we took our seats the driver said, "There surely ain't a meaner cuss going than that there Wheeler; if he weren't a passenger I'd hit him in the eye! Now, my beauties, gently does it, we've gotten to thank you for our lives."

"And you," said the gentleman from Boston, "you most of all, though your team behaved splendidly."

"So they did, you bet!" replied the driver, caressing them with his whip; "no more mountains now, that's a streak of luck, anyhow, considering that we've busted our brakes."

"Do you know the brave fellow who has gone after those ruffians?"

"No; shouldn't wonder the colonel—who's never seen a regiment, you bet—is right about him; anyhow, he's mighty smart, and an all-fired good fellow, too."

"I think I have met him somewhere before," I said.

"Likely," replied the driver; "rather rough, them loafers to get the drop on us; hope he'll get the drop on them—he knows the lay of the land."

"Yes, and knows it well, I should say," replied the other outsider.

"Goes agin the grain to drive away from him," said the driver, "but he guv his instructions strict, ain't it?"

"That's so," said the Boston gentleman.

"You bet! I wouldn't wonder that he is a real colonel now, and seen action; why, he jest slipped into that bush like a Injun. Jest turn your head and report, sir."

I turned and looked along the road, and fixed my eyes upon the locality of the distant clump of trees.

"Nothing to be seen," I said.

"It's a mile to the turn of the road; if there's any shooting we'd catch the crack of it here, but not further; guess we'll pull up, eh?"

"Yes," we both said.

"They're not likely to get the drop on us again?"

"No," said the Boston gentleman, producing a six-shooter from a traveling-bag, which the thieves had overlooked.

The coach stopped.

"Hallo! what's this?" exclaimed the colonel.

"Find out, you cyote!" shouted the driver.

"I'll certainly report you," said the colonel, his head out at the window.

"You ten-cent tin-pot colonel," said the driver, "give up your ticket and its privileges, and step into the scrub for five minutes, and I'll report you to heaven or the other place."

"I will do nothing of the kind, but if there weren't a lady present—"

"Upon my word, colonel," said the lady, "you are too considerate."

"No, madam, no gentleman can be too considerate of the ladies," replied the colonel, with a bow.

"Ain't you jest a trifle over-considerate of yourself?" said the driver. "I'd be sorry to do anything to offend madam; but you seem to me to be taking the protection of the lady as if she was a shield or a stone wall, instead of a free-spoken lady, as is willing for you to take chances."

"I guess, sir," said the colonel, "this is the last time I will ever take tickets for your coach."

"I hope so," said the driver.

All this time the Boston gentleman was boiling over with rage. At last he slid from his seat to the ground, and burst out with—

"Look here, you fellow, I am not too much of a gentleman to refuse to take a lady at her word, nor am I an official of the Leadville Stage Company, and if you make another remark in my hearing, on any subject between here and Leadville, I will pound you within an inch of your life, do you hear?"

The colonel did not speak, and, to emphasize his threat, the stout old boy, his face blazing with passion, slapped the colonel on the right cheek with his open hand.

"Great Father! And has it come to this?" exclaimed the bully, staggering under the shock.

"Serves you right!" said the lady; "now you'll be quiet."

The colonel took a handkerchief from his pocket, put it to his eyes, and retreated, sobbing audibly.

"Your feelings are hurt, are they?" we could hear the lady saying to him; "you shouldn't be a fool, you might have seen their patience wouldn't last out."

Then he would groan, and she would snap at him afresh.

"They've met before, you bet," said the driver; "came aboard *fifty miles apart*, didn't speak till the lady got out at the Gulch."

"Then he gave me his outside seat," I said.

"Queer, ain't it?" said the driver; "and that agent a-knowing the mean cuss's name—never know who's aboard a coach."

He was straining his eyes along the road as he spoke.

"Way ho!" he suddenly exclaimed, "Way ho! Yes! By the mountain of the holy cross, which the converted Injuns swear by, he's got 'em, sure! Yonder they come, sure's you're alive!"

They had evidently come out of a path we did not see, but which the man in the sombrero knew—two men, a horseman, and a horse that followed. The two men on foot marched a short distance from the horseman, who carried a rifle handy, as if for prompt use in case of need.

We were all in the road now, our weapons in our hands.

"They might have confeds, no knowing," said the driver; "best be on guard, but he's got 'em, you bet!"

"That is so, indeed," said the Boston gentleman.

"Stay where you are," we heard the lady passenger say; and the colonel stayed where he was.

The two men in front of the rider were prisoners; each had his hands tied together, and both looked considerably chop-fallen.

"Here they are, judge," said the man in the sombrero; "just cover them while I deliver up the swag."

The man in the sombrero dismounted and handed me my belt.

"A good thing I happened to turn up, eh, stranger?" he said, now in a voice I could not mistake; "the partner who thought it best to deposit stock to bearer in the bank for you, knew the road you were traveling, eh?"

"George!" I exclaimed, seizing his hand.

"All right, stranger," he said, now in his assumed voice, "guess I need no thanks, and it was easy work. I calculated they wouldn't go far without sitting down to divide their spoil—couldn't trust each other, must divvy up soon as the coast was clear. I walked through the scrub to the green bit of open where their horses were tied, and covered them, just in the midst of their thieves' arithmetic. Made the tall one tie the other fellow's hands, and he did it vicious because it was the short one who would stop and divvy up; made the tall one lie on his back while I tied his; and now, judge, what's to be done with them—there's a good tree or two ahead if you've rope enough?"

"Better try 'em first," said the driver.

"No need to try us, we're guilty," said the shortest of the two rogues; "game's your'n, three kings beat two pair, but I'd like to say a word for my pard, it's his first game, I led him into it, and it's through me as the polite gent here got the drop on us; now, put a bullet through me, and chuck me into the scrub; but let my pard go, he's married to my sister, you see, all square and fair, and she's awaitin' for him in Leadville, and don't know as he's any worse than a keno dealer: and if you'll let him go, why, I'll put you up to a job that'll make you jump, the judge there, higher nor a kite."

"What have you to say?" asked the driver, addressing the other robber.

"Don't part us; it's true what my pard says, I won't leave him; but if it's to be shooting, take off our boots."

The two horses rubbed their noses together; the Nancy Bell of our coaching team neighed to them.

"What's to be done with the horses, judge?" asked the captor.

"Oh, hitch 'em on behind, they'll travel easy," said the driver.

"It would be asking too much to let us off?" said the first robber.

"I should smile!" said the judge; "let you take your boots off, ain't that good enough?"

"It's civil, anyhow," said the crestfallen robber; "we ain't struck no luck all our lives, not a show worth a cent. Who's to do the trick, we're ready?"

"Let them say a prayer first," interposed the weeping colonel.

"Ah, you sneak thief!" exclaimed the first robber, "you are a nice bloated loafer to talk of praying, ain't you?"

"You know this honorable gentleman, then?" said the Bostonian, "this colonel in the United States Army?"

"United States prison I knowed him, the rabbit-eyed galoot!" was the scornful reply.

"I thought so," said the Bostonian, his genial face beaming with delight.

"You scoundrel!" said the colonel, "how dare you address me in those vulgar terms! By thunder! if you were not a prisoner—"

The lady pulled the colonel by the sleeve.

"Scoundrel, and if I weren't a prisoner, eh? Well, if the brave gentleman with the carbine would give us five minutes together, I'd

like to get even with you, Mister Keno Plugg, for that little affair at Chicago."

"Keno Plugg!" said the Bostonian; "why, surely, that is the pseudonym of the forger of the United States bonds, for whom a reward of five thousand dollars is offered!"

"And that's Baltimore Sal, his confed, who led the whisky mission at Chicago, when he was slinging gospel truths at the great revival meeting."

"A nice pair, as the devil said of his horns," remarked the Bostonian.

"And now I'm even, Mister Keno Plugg, with you and your crowd; you've made us suffer more'n once, ain't he, Bill?"

The other robber nodded, and the colonel called upon his great father to witness that the babe unborn was not more innocent than he, and this good lady, whom he had never seen in his life until that day. These low thieves, caught in the act, deserved death the more that they had calumniated a virtuous lady, an officer of the army of the great and glorious republic—and so on.

The judge tried to stop the colonel's rush of eloquence; but the tide flowed on full of religious sentiment, and demands that the law of the road should take its course.

"Oh, don't stop to try us," said the spokesman of the two thieves, "if you are not above traveling with a sneak thief, a horse thief, a mine salter, and a forger, you needn't stand on such a trifle as trying us before you shoot us."

There was a careless, dare-devil impudence in the rascally bravery of the thief that I think softened all of us, none the less so that we had recovered our property.

"Gentlemen," said the driver, "we waste time; I don't care to have even such blood as theirs on my conscience, so I quit this position—to the captor the spoil is a political proverb. Let the gentleman on my right say what's to be done."

"Agreed," we said, we who spoke; the colonel and the lady were silent.

"Colonel Plugg Keno Malleson," said the stranger, "haul out your baggage."

The colonel hesitated.

"Quick, or you are a dead 'un."

The colonel obeyed.

"Which trunk contains the bonds, all that are left?"

"By thunder!" exclaimed the colonel, beginning to open one of two leather cases.

The stranger raised his carbine.

"Open the other."

"Judge, help him."

The case was opened. An inner box had to be forced; the colonel could not find the key. A packet of bonds for a large amount was found therein.

"Well," said the colonel, "who denounces them? They are as good as virgin gold. This is a conspiracy to rob me."

As he spoke he was edging away toward the bush, and the next moment he had disappeared.

"That don't matter—it gives us a good way out," said the stranger. "It is agreed that I deal in this business as I please?"

"Yes, yes," we said.

"Judge, unloose Messieurs the agents of the road.

They were freed.

"Now, boys, a word," said the stranger. "Let this be a warning to you; villainy don't pay; thieving is a bad business; murder is always avenged at last by lynch or by law. You are free."

One uttered a joyous cry, the other burst into tears.

"Have you any money?"

"No, sir."

"Here's fifty dollars, there are your horses, and if you catch Mr. Keno Plugg and take him to Denver, you'll get the reward—perhaps you'll go to prison too, unless you get a clever lawyer—"

"'A free pardon to confederates' is a clause in the proclamation," said the Boston gentleman; "beg pardon for interrupting."

They crept upon the backs of their horses.

"Now, then, away you go," said the stranger.

They dashed along the road for half a mile, and then in a cloud of dust disappeared into the bush.

"Now, gentlemen," said the driver, "all aboard."

As he said so he replaced the colonel's baggage.

"Now, madam."

"I don't go any further," she said.

"But you can't stay here."

"As well here as anywhere else."

"No, we can't leave you," said the stranger.

"*He is my husband*," she said.

"Stuff!" remarked the gentleman from Boston. "Your confederate in crime."

"Still, he's my husband," she said, calmly; "not one to be proud of, I own, but such as he is, I've sworn to stand by him: we've had some good times together, we've had bad times, but I guess I won't leave him."

"Your show of affection is very sudden, madam."

"Is it?" she said, in a vague way.

"Very; why, you were willing to let him have a real row not long since."

"He was prosperous then."

"What difference does that make?"

"Do you care for a man as much when he's rich as when he's in trouble?"

"Yes, I do."

"Ah, then, you're not a woman, you see," she answered, with a melancholy smile; "and a woman's a poor, weak fool, ain't she?"

"If you care for a cowardly ruffian such as that," replied the Bostonian, jerking his thumb in the direction the forger had taken, "you are not the shrewd, sensible lady I took you for."

"Well, I do," she said.

"And yet you let me smite him on the cheek, and said it served him right."

"Because I knew that nothing else would quiet him, and I was afear'd he'd commit himself, having, as I knew, so much at stake."

"You are an enigma," said the Bostonian.

"Don't call me names," she said.

"Are you American?"

"I don't know."

"That's odd."

"My father was Irish, and my mother was a Swede."

"And how long have you been with that fellow?"

"We've been married five years."

"And you prefer to stay here and wait for him, or follow him, spite of hunger, danger, and the chance of having to tramp to Leadville."

"Yes, sir, prefer to die here, rather than leave him," she said, bursting into tears.

Genuine (and I think it was) or acted, this exhibition of the devotion of a decent kind of woman to a worthless scamp touched

us. On a brief consultation we resolved that we would not leave her.

"You tell her, sir," said the man in the sombrero.

"We have decided that we take you along," said the Bostonian; "now don't cry."

"I can not help it," she sobbed.

"But we make no charge against you; and we will stick a notification on that tree in the bush, level with this spot, informing your husband that you are gone on to Leadville, and that you are free—we make no charge against you."

"Thank you, sir."

I wrote out the notification, and the judge nailed it up.

"Now, all aboard!" said the driver.

We handed her into the coach with as much solicitude as if she had been the best of her sex.

"Can't I have my trunk inside?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," said the driver, dragging it from the fore part of the coach, and pushing it inside.

"Thank you, sir," she said.

"Want to skip with it on the road?" he asked.

"Let her if she wants to," said the man in the sombrero, "we've done our duty; I'll take that other seat on top."

So the lady now became the sole inside passenger, and in due course she executed the movement "to skip," which the driver suggested.

When we arrived at Leadville the lady had disappeared. She had succeeded in carrying off a small trunk and valise—no doubt dropped them from the coach, and then at a convenient point, when it was dark, and we were traveling slowly, she slipped out after them.

The reader will no doubt remember the trial of the bogus Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler, for forgery, which took place a year after his capture. He was sent to States prison, and "Baltimore Sal" to the penitentiary. Mr. Johnson, of the firm of Johnson and Brothers, and the driver of the Leadville Stage, gave evidence as to the discovery of certain scrip and other things in the prisoner's possession. The reward of one thousand dollars was divided between two men who had made the capture. A full pardon had been granted to them on a charge which some friends of the prisoner had brought against them; and so much confidence had the chief

of the police in their reformation and in their skill, that he had been able to find them places in the detective corps of a neighboring city.

I have thought it best to close up this incident of my ride to Leadville by what may be called a forward narratory movement, before getting back to the immediate current of our story.

"May I not have a word with you?" I said to the man in the sombrero.

"If you insist," said George.

I had followed him to his room in the hotel.

"I do."

"What is it?"

"Give up this fatal mission of yours," I said, "and—"

He raised his hand, stopping my further speech with an angry and authoritative gesture.

"Have you so soon forgotten your oath, and your word of honor? Will you be as ready to lay aside a pledge at the altar of your Christian Church?"

"George!" I exclaimed, intending to make a last eloquent appeal to him.

"George Newbolde is dead, and buried—you have never met him, do you hear? Are you so selfish that you want to gather up for yourself all the happiness that belongs to the meeting fate ordained in the mountains we have left behind us? May I not have my small share in it?"

"Ah, my friend, it is because I wish you to be happy that I desire to—"

"Break a solemn pledge—to dishonor your name—to go back on a bond that is cemented by business, by friendship, and by love. No, you would die first, eh? You have as much courage as that wretched woman we have left on the road; is it not so?"

"I show some courage by challenging our bond, I wish to heaven I had courage enough to break it."

A pitying look I thought came into his eyes as he said: "You will not break it;" but the expression changed to a frown, as he said: "*You dare not*—for her sake; and because your great heart takes no stock in the maintenance of the ruthless Tarquin, who, dishonoring the wife, assassinates the husband, abducts one child, to leave the other alone in the great world with its sorrow—and its mission. Oh, partner, brother, I cry for justice! These are my

last words to you, here in this land, where the tardy law is supplemented by the keen instincts of a liberty-loving people! Farewell!"

It was destined that his shadow should fall across my path once again, and at an unexpected moment, in a lonely street near the old Manse at Sandwich.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

"HOMEWARD BOUND," I MEET A FRIENDLY AGENT OF "THE BOSS OF DRUMMOND'S GULCH."

IF we were to set down plainly and honestly the common events of our lives, coupled with the incidents of adventure with which we are made acquainted in passing through the world, how much more remarkable these histories would be than the romances of fiction!

I have been told by an eminent novelist that the truest portions of his books are generally regarded as false, while the purely imaginative passages are commended for their realism.

There are writers who can only tell one story well—one-book novelists, who deal with their own personal records and have then no more to say. Invention of plot was not necessary at the outset. This I am told they are apt to forget when they come to the real work of writing romances.

If there be any merit in this story of several lives the reader will judge of it from the standpoint of the confession, that I, Hickory Maynard, declare it is my first perfected narrative. When, however, I compare its romantic episodes, and what I have regarded as its startling incidents, with the events which are continually transpiring in London, the strangeness of it sinks into commonplace, even in my eyes.

Every day in this vast metropolis what mysteries are going on, how many people disappear and leave no trace, what dark deeds are done, what wild dramas of real life are enacted!

Link as Fate does some of these passages of current history with tragic events beyond the seas, and what startling pages even

an ill-instructed author might write, with nothing but a basis of solid truth to build upon.

Such romance as there is in my life for example links Drummond's Gulch away beyond the Rocky Mountains with this great English metropolis; and the two, that mining camp and this London, find culminating interest in the old-world town of Sandwich, where the wolf Lust fell upon the lamb Vanity in those dark days of George Newbolde's unhappy youth.

One may touch shoulders with Destiny in the street. We are quietly walking home and Fate lays his hand upon us. Forthwith we become actors in some undreamt-of romance; perhaps its central figures. That night when I went to the Adelphi Theatre for the first time in my life, Fate may be said to have stood at the door and handed me my ticket.

She was a farmer's daughter in the play, and suffered calumny to save the daughter of a lord, endured shame and the scoffing of her native village, out of love for her foster sister. She was the humblest of the two heroines of the play; and in the programme they called her Margaret Willoughby. I went home with her face in my memory, and her name engraved for ever in my heart.

I see her now as the Celtic plows her way through the sea that washes the shores of Manhattan, see her in fancy, as she takes my hand for the first time at the wolf's lodgings in Buckingham Street; and I look back as the land drops gradually away out of sight and wonder at my strange and good fortune in America.

Going out, I traveled with a second-class ticket and had a stranger in my narrow room. Returning home, I travel *en prince*. There is only one passenger on board who has better accommodation than I have. He occupies the captain's state-room. He is "a western banker" my steward tells me, "awfully rich." I do not envy him; I too, so far as my requirements go, am awfully rich, though a poor man in comparison with the wealthy banker from the West. My state-room is amidships, and I am worth money enough to realize more than the hope and ambition that my wildest dreams ever suggested. I could not help contrasting my lot as a first-class passenger on the Celtic with my outward journey as an emigrant in the Nevada. Now I had a seat at the captain's table; then I was only admitted into the saloon on Sunday to hear the service of the church. And shall I ever forget joining in the vocal prayer for *those at sea?* Never, any more than I shall ever forget my escape

from the burning hotel, the coach ride of the previous chapter, the collapse of Colonel Malleson N. Wheeler, and the cool courage of the "stranger" in the sombrero,

Life for me during the past few months had been full of surprises. First the surprise of my failure. I am bound to say that astonished me as much as my success. I had gone out to America, as you know, with fair prospects. How they disappeared I need not repeat; how I resolved to work my way and didn't; how I drifted to Chicago and made money; how I lost it as money made by speculation is generally lost; how, standing on the hard bedrock of misfortune, I found a friend there in a perfect stranger; how he sent me to Drummond's Gulch; how I found in the boss of the Revenge Mine the brother of Maggie with a hut full of wealth; these are to me, as I reflect upon them, very surprising incidents; they must, I feel assured, appear remarkable to the reader; but we are drifting into more turbulent waters than any perhaps that we have yet navigated together on this Sea of Destiny into which Fate launched me on that quiet summer holiday at Sandwich.

On the second day out from New York I ran against "the awfully rich banker from the West." Who was he? Who should he be but our friend Manwaring G. Wilkess!

He was standing at the door of the captain's room on the larboard side of the gangway.

"Why, how are you?" he said, in his quiet, but emphatic manner; "thought you were going up to Drummond's Gulch."

"And I thought you were going to Tombstone," I replied.

"Been there," he said, smiling and chewing the end of an unlighted cigar.

"And I've been to the Gulch," I said, dropping into his laconic style of speech.

"I know," he said, "and you're his partner."

"Yes."

"We are thundering quick doing things in our country," he said; it's the climate, I guess."

"You have seen George, then?"

"George," he replied; "who's George?"

"I mean Dick."

"Who was you thinking of when you said 'George?'"

"Dick," I replied.

"Is that *so*?"

"That's so, colonel," I replied.

"I ain't no colonel, my friend; just you call me Wilkess, and I'll call you—"

"Maynard," I said.

"Come in, Maynard, and let's drink," he said; "this is my room."

He stepped into the gangway and pushed the door open.

I entered, he followed.

"Guess this ain't so bad for a ship," he said; "never been on one of these liners before; paid five hundred dollars for this room, cheapest thing I've struck since I left Tombstone."

"A beautiful room," I said.

He had rung for the steward.

"The bar-keeper's gotten a case of wine on the ice for me, bring a bottle."

"Yes, sir," said the trim-looking attendant.

"Cute fellers some of these Britishers," said Wilkess, as the steward left the room; "clean cut about the head, broad in the chest, smart and yet solid."

"I guess it's the climate," I said taking up a favorite expression of his own.

"Oh, is it?" he answered; "they tell me you can cut your climate with a knife."

"Sometimes," I answered; "if you are in London in November, you will be able to take specimens of it back in your trunks to Tombstone."

"What's the duty on it?" he asked.

"I think you admit it free," I answered, "as it is the only thing you don't want from our side."

"Now that's nasty," he said; "Colorado has certainly put an edge on your wit, it's just wonderful how you Britishers improve on our side; it *is* the climate, there ain't no other explanation. Well, here we go."

He had filled two tumblers with champagne, lifting his own and prefacing its disappearance with Lady Ann's bar-room toast.

"Good luck!" I said, "and here we go."

"You remind me of Lady Ann," I said.

"Why?"

"Not because you are like her."

"*And who's* Lady Ann?"

"Don't you know her?"

"Not by a darned sight."

"I thought you knew the Gulch."

"Guess I do."

"Then you must know the 'Castle.'"

"Is this a game of chess?"

"It is not a game at all," I said.

"Conundrum?"

"No."

"Ship talk?"

"No."

"Then give it a name, youngster; you were a darned sight more slick at calling things by their right names when I met you at Chicago."

"Well, the bar-room at the camp of the Revenge Mine is called the 'Castle,' and Lady Ann is the wife of the boss, and he is Sir Thomas Montgomery; didn't you know that?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, then, I have added to your knowledge of the Gulch."

"That's so. Shouldn't have thought there was a lady there at all; weren't no petticoat around when I was there last—"

"Oh, then, I beg your pardon," I said, "I thought you had been a frequent visitor at Drummond's Gulch."

"No, sir; how's the Solid Bank at Tombstone going to get along with a boss that's continually loafing around Drummond's Gulch, and how's one going to loaf around there when it's a fifty-five hours' trip from the Bank to the Revenge?"

"You correct me," I replied; "when you said 'here we go' you reminded me of Lady Ann in the kind of twinkle of the elbow which accompanied your action of putting that cocktail to your lips."

"Oh, she twinkled, did she—twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what she are, eh?" said the banker, closing one eye and poking very knowing with the other.

"Sir Thomas's wife, and an excellent creature," I said.

"All women are excellent creatures; never see one as wasn't in the Rockies, anyhow. The trouble is there's so few of 'em. Sir Thomas her only husband?"

"Yes."

"Sir Thomas his name?"

"Yes, he is an English baronet."

"You don't say?"

"Fact."

"What, a nobleman, same as the Duke of Totlands and Sir Dickory Walker, Bart., who came out last year to buy the Five Forks Mine?'

"A nobleman, a born English aristocrat."

"And him and his wife keeping a bar-room at the Gulch?"

"Why not?" I said.

"Ask me another," he replied, "an easier one. I guess I never understood where the difference between your aristocrats and other people came in until I see the duke and the baronight at the Five Forks; but there was some great boss Englishmen along, and though they bunked together and chipped in at poker and the rest of the fun, the duke and the other they were of a superior mold, that's a fact, and made us feel it. The duke was the darndest fellow at poker. We had a big night the time they quit. There was six of us. I call to mind the last pot. It was this way. We were all in. The ante was straddled. Each man took cards. We all had good hands. There was two hundred dollars in the pot. 'It's our last flutter,' said the baronight; 'I bet two hundred dollars.' The boss of Five Forks called the baronight, but the senator for Athens he raised it three hundred dollars. The call was five hundred dollars, and the next man—that was me—called it. When it came round to the duke, who dealt, he raised it one thousand and lighted a fresh cigar. This scared all of us except the boss of Five Forks, who saw the duke and went a thousand better. The duke saw that, and went two thousand five hundred better. The boss smiled, and asked the duke if he was going for the money he had paid on account of the mine. The duke said he guessed he was just amusing himself, doing at Rome as the Romans did, and the game went on until there was just about six thousand dollars in the pot, and then the boss of Five Forks called the duke, who laid down a full, three queens and a pair of tens. The boss drew a check for six thousand and laid his cards down, three knaves and a pair of nines. Nature's noblemen, and one of the blood royal, those two poker-players, you bet. The boss was just as polite to the duke as the duke was to the boss; but I would no more think of either the duke or the baronight keeping a bar-room than I could think of Queen *Victoria running* a pea-nut mill."

"Ah, you have much to learn; we are far more democratic than you dream of; my coal-merchant is an earl, and I hire my *coupés* from a marquis."

"Why, I guess that's meaner than anything you could get Jay Gould or Vanderbilt on; but, by thunder, you Britishers are the dangdest fellers; guess I'll visit the Gulch on my way home."

"Do," I said; "and when do you go home?"

"Depends on the tide—that tide in the affairs of men Dick Drummond used to talk of, when first he put a pick into pay gravel at the Gulch. Didn't expect to see me on the ocean, eh?"

"No, but glad to see you anywhere," I said; "you did me the best turn one man ever did another."

"Put it down to the climate," he replied. "This is thundering good wine—"

"And in returning you the thousand dollars you lent me when I sorely needed help, I can not sufficiently thank you, but—"

"That's all right," he said, taking out his pocket-book, "that's all right—no interest on loan; and that's correct, it was friendship, not business, that thousand dollars—you was hard up—I've been there myself."

He counted the bills carefully as he spoke.

"Business is one thing," he said, packing the bills into his pocket-book, and thrusting it inside his vest, "and friendship's another—you found Dick a real white man?"

"He and you have saved me from God knows what misery. I go home rich at a time when money means everything in the world to me—"

"I know," he said, interrupting me, "I know, he told me you was his partner, and asked me to go out and fix up a settlement of ten thousand dollars a year on your wife."

"Indeed; he is too good; did he tell you who she is?"

"Miss Margaret Edward Newbolde, daughter of the late Edward Barnes Newbolde, of Sandwich, England—is that correct?"

"Yes; is that all?"

"No, I was to find you, and go to your mother's lawyers, and have it done all square, and according to English rule."

"And is he not coming to England?"

"Guess so; but, as I said before, he's a bit of a crank, though he's one of *them cranks* as will have their own way, like a Missis-

sippi captain on a Mississippi boat, and he would have me run this thing for him."

"Anything else?"

"Ain't that enough—want to go me fifty better?"

"No, sir," I said, "not until I know how much you are putting up."

"Well, I've said my say."

"You lay over me," I responded, "you seem to have a full."

"Is that your answer?"

"It is."

"Let's drink then."

We drank. We likewise smoked. We talked in poker parlance. We discussed many things. But Mr. Wilkess was evidently not in the secret of the real name of the boss of Drummond's Gulch, nor of his relationship to Maggie, nor of his plans for the future.

"Dick was a wild fellow when you first knew him?"

"How's that?"

"He was reckless, down on his luck?"

"Not much!"

"But he must have had a hard time of it?"

"Guess none of us in the Rockies began with feather beds, and brown stone fronts, and we didn't expect canvas-back, Spanish mackerel, and terrapin, all the time."

"No, of course not," I said; "but our friend Dick, you said he was a bit of a crank?"

"There are several sorts of cranks. There's the crank who bluffs through life; the crank as is always a-swearing what he's going to do. and don't do it; and there's the crank that don't swear much about the future, so much as he swears about the past, but has always got his eye on the future, and one day strikes pay dirt, and later, comes on the metal itself; that's the sort of crank Dick is."

"Yes," I said, trying to lead him on, "always has his eye on the future."

"Always."

"But when a man's got all he wants, there is no very particular future for him to keep his eye on, eh?"

"When a man has!" he exclaimed, winking once more.

"But Dick has!"

"*Oh, yes, I guess* so."

"Few men are richer?"

"Guess he's above poverty."

"But still has his eye on the future?"

"Don't know what you've got," said Wilkess, looking me straight in the face; "but I call you."

"I wanted to call you," I said.

"Nothing in my hand—not even a pair," he replied.

When I lay in my berth pondering over the situation, looking at the reverse of the medal on which my good fortune was stamped, the picture was far from satisfactory. However well-deserved would be Fitzherbert Willoughby's violent death at the hands of my benefactor, it would nevertheless be murder in the eye of the law, and surely it would be murder in the eyes of heaven.

"A life for a life," was a favorite quotation of George at the Gulch; but both the old and new dispensations, Bible and Testanent, were opened on the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder." George, however, insisted upon regarding himself as God's nstrument of vengeance, His agent, the Nemesis of a wicked man's :rime.

Apart from the moral and legal aspect of the case, there was its ersonal side as it affected Margaret, and as it affected me.

George Newbolde was bent on killing Chingford Lucas. He night succeed in his plans without being discovered. I should still e married to the sister of a murderer, not to say morally, if not egally, an accessory before the fact. My soul would be burdened vith a horrible secret that might grow into a morbid affliction of ny spirits.

Then, supposing the avenger of his father's death and dishonor vere taken, his plea of "a life for a life" would be of no avail, unless it were legally strained into a respite from the gollows, for the lmost more terrible doom of perpetual incarceration as a madman. Moreover, the entire story would come out on the trial, and Maggie would only discover her brother to say good-by to him forever; would only find the clew to the secret of her birth and parentage to iote upon it all the smudges of the slough through which Fate had lragged it, and have to bewail her lot in linking it to the pure if simple story of my own family. For she would feel that in this she iad hurt me and mine, to realize which would be to make her a niserable, not a happy wife. Already I had had experience of her susceptibility *in this* direction.

"I stand in the way of your advancement," she had written in one of her latest letters; "but for me I often think your brothers would be more considerate in their treatment of you, and the announcement of our marriage will widen the breach between you and them."

As if I cared for my brothers! They had cast me off. I was the black sheep in the family. I had failed at college, and had not even been successful in the city. When those who owe you love and affection give you hatred and contumely, they have made a breach between you and them which can not be widened. Oceans roll between you; seas of forgetfulness wash the twin shores of your memories; my brothers had forgotten me, I them; but I had found a new brother, a brother who had stretched his hand out to me in my trouble; but at what a cost to both of us?

And should I in his peril, should I at the moment when he was going on blindfolded to the precipice, stand idly by and let him on?

It was evident that Newbolde meant to keep on my track to find his foe. I was to be the silent, not unconscious, guide to the quarry. Why did I not grapple with the problem that now daunted me when it presented itself to me at Drummond's Gulch? I ought not to have accepted his conditions. If he was dead to Margaret he was not dead to me, nor dead to the dear old vicar at Sandwich.

Had the wild life of the mining camp, the contempt they have of life, the men outside of civilization, had these things influenced me? Or had I been in the hands of a stronger brain, a stronger arm, a more powerful physique? Or had the prospect of a speedy and successful return to England and to Maggie blunted my moral sense?

I was sorely troubled, and a strong reminiscence of my college days cropped up to sharpen the edge of my anxiety. *Qui non prohibet quod, prohibere potest assentire videtur*—"he who does not prevent a crime when he can encourages it." Was this a crime which George Newbolde contemplated?

I could not deny that it was. Could I prevent it?

CHAPTER II.

COCKTAILS AND PHILOSOPHY.

"WHY, Maynard, how's this?" said the voice of Manwaring Wilkess. "Are you sick?"

He opened the port-hole of my state-room as he spoke.

"Anyhow, guess a little fresh air won't do no harm; one thing the bosses on board a steamer seem to object to—fresh air."

Then he fastened my room door open.

"No sea on just now, got no reason to be sick; blew fresh in the night, but—"

"I'm not sick," I replied, "thank you."

"Guess you've gotten a sick voice—here, hi there, steward!"

"Yes, sir."

"Go to my steward Tom, and tell him to bring a bottle of wine here, some bitters, cracked ice, lemon peel, sugar."

"Yes, sir."

"Right away; it should take Tom three minutes to get round here."

"Yes, sir."

"And, hi, steward!"

"Yes, sir."

"A sardine sandwich."

"Yes, sir."

As the steward hurried away the sea dashed in upon us through the port-hole.

"It don't matter; we've had the fresh air—a little salt water won't hurt us."

He closed the port-hole.

"You wanted me to think she's not pitching: that's all right, old chap," I said; "but sea-sickness is not a matter of imagination, it is a physical disability, but I'm better now."

"And you are not sick?"

"Not now."

"No breakfast, no lunch, says I; is this all-fired Britisher under the weather; I'll go and see; and you ain't sick? Well, I'm glad of it; I'll fix you a champagne cocktail that will make your hair curl."

"Don't care to have my hair curled," I said, sitting up, "but I won't object to the cocktail."

"Should think you will not. You look as sick as a fellow who's been called on a full, ace high, by a royal flush. Ah, here we are!"

I sat and watched my gaunt, lanky, bright-eyed friend mix a cocktail—a wonderful fascinating operation when the concocter is an earnest man, and you feel a hankering after a pick-me-up.

"Guess there ain't no sickness of any kind under the sun, on sea or land, that won't give way to a judicious treatment of champagne cocktail. Here we go!"

He touched the rim of my glass with his own, I repeated the magic words, "here we go," and felt very much better for this timely visit of my fellow-passenger.

"Sandwich to follow," he said, handing me a dainty little dish of sandwiches with a sprig of fresh parsley on the top of them.

There is nothing a fellow more appreciates at sea than little attentions of this kind.

I never tasted a better sandwich, and a second cocktail made a new man of me.

"Won't you come on deck?"

"Yes. I have had no sleep."

"What's wrong—liver, eh?"

"No; mind," I said:

"Got so much of it that it troubles you; well, come out into the fresh air and give it a treat."

"I will."

"Three fellows in my room want to play poker, come and take a hand—never met the man who had too much mind for that; perhaps you may be an exception."

"I wish I had as strong a mind as you have, ay, and as big and broad an intellectual faculty," I said; "I'm a poor creature."

"Not now," he remarked. "Do you want another cocktail? Well, have it on deck."

"No," I said, "there are sicknesses of the mind for which cocktails even are not specifics. Canst minister to a mind diseased?"

"Guess I can," he said; "only a question of the dose—you said I reminded you of Lady Ann, you remind me of Dick Drummond; *he used to spout* Shakespeare and poetry and that kind of furniture *when first I knew* him."

"Yes? about a mind diseased?" I asked.

"A mind diseased maketh the heart sick, that ain't it, eh?"

"No, hope delayed," I said, "that is the—".

"Well, we won't delay it any longer, I guess; now you just get up right away and come on deck."

He left me. I thought he smiled at me in an odd, "knowing" kind of way as he went out, as much as to say "you can't pump me." I felt it as if it were a challenge. The cocktail had "picked me up." I felt the glow of the liquor in my face. "We shall see," I said, as I dressed myself. "You are not to be pumped, eh?" Then I tried to think that Fate has placed him in my hands for a good purpose. "A week at sea is a year in the way of making friends and exchanging confidences," I said to myself. "Wilkess is Newbolde's ally in a scheme of vengeance, I am sure of it; he shall be mine in a scheme of safety and happiness; I will tell him all and yet keep my word, if that is possible, or he shall tell me all. There is a Jesuitical way of breaking a vow and yet keeping it. I will be a Jesuit then."

The champagne had made me bold, if not eloquent. I went on deck. After a short and somewhat unsteady promenade, I went into Wilkess's room and took a hand at poker.

"Jest to change your thoughts and wake you up," said Wilkess. "There ain't no game in the whole world that is more calculated to start your ideas on to a new track than a little draw poker."

If I had played a game at cards when going out to America for money, I should probably have lost all I staked, for I was poor. Now that I had no need nor any desire to increase my means, I won with ease. I say with ease, because I took no special pains, and my mind was often far away from the captain's room, and occasionally it was occupied with studying Wilkess. The tall, gaunt, bronzed Westerner thrust his long legs under the table, until you could see his square toes on the other side of it; and there was no more expression in his face than there was in his boots. His eyes, which usually had a humorous twinkle in them, were now the eyes of a sphynx; if they looked anywhere it was introspective.

His face was a piece of well-carved wood. Whether he bluffed or bet squarely on three of a kind, his face never changed. The other three men, two from Chicago, one from New York, who were known to Wilkess, were not demonstrative, but in appearance, manner, and *finesse*, Wilkess was the ideal poker player, who never re-

laxed his interest in the game, and who played to win as earnestly as if his life depended upon it.

"You are the whitest Britisher I've ever met," he said, when we adjourned for dinner; "you appreciate a bit of attention, you pay your debts, and you play poker with the cuteness of a down east Yankee on a Mississippi steamer."

"But our friend of Drummond's Gulch," I said, "he is a white man?"

"Down to his toe-nails; but we claim him; he ain't no Englishman any more—he's real American."

"You feel a deep interest in him?"

"Guess I do."

"Would do anything to serve him?"

"Bet your life on it."

"If he were bent upon some enterprise that might land him in a serious difficulty, would you step between him and his plans?"

"Depends; guess there is no need to go from London to Japan and San Francisco to strike Broadway, New York."

"You want a full explanation of my possible case; I can not give it."

"Then you can't get a yes, or no, out of me to a question I don't understand."

"I will put my point in another way. I am deeply indebted to George—I mean to Dick—Drummond—"

"Well?"

"He has made me pledge my word to do a certain thing—"

"So; I catch on."

"I was his guest, he was my benefactor, he had strong claims on me—"

"Was it in the shape of a bargain?" Wilkess asked, balancing himself against the wall of his state-room, and chewing the end of his cigar.

"You mean service for service?" I said, answering him with another question.

"That's what I mean."

"Well, yes, I must say it would bear that construction."

"Well?"

"Now, supposing on reflection I find that if I keep my part of the agreement, and thus enable him to embark upon an enterprise—"

"Enterprise," he said, interrupting me, "is a word that covers a multitude of sins. What particular sin is it he wants to commit?"

The shrewdness of this question gave me pause.

I was sitting upon a sofa, and looking at the closed port which was washed now and then by an angry sea. While I asked him questions, I was inventing others. As a rule, I look at a man when I am talking to him. But I did not wish Wilkess to have the chance of examining my face too critically. His interpretation of the word enterprise pulled me up. I looked at him. He ceased to bite the end of his cigar, and smoked reflectively.

"What particular *sin?*" I said; "you give the word enterprise a very bad character."

"Yes, I know several enterprising men; I come across one of 'em quite recently, and he was a countryman of yours, too; he runs a black-mailing newspaper, one of the most enterprising cusses I know in America."

"A black-mailing newspaper?" I said, rather to gain time than to question the existence of the journalistic thumb-screw.

"You want to change the subject?" he said, "there goes the second dinner-bell."

"We will return to the subject," I replied, "not change it, after dinner."

"You like to talk about the boss?"

"Yes."

"He's real grit, he is! I like to talk about the boss, too."

"Sometimes I think you don't."

"That's kinder curious, because, sometimes I think you force him as I've seen card-sharpers force a card."

"You mean, I try and draw you into conversation about Dick?"

"That's the politer way of putting it."

"Well, and if I do?"

"No harm done, Mister Maynard, no harm done, and sea-talk is different to land-talk, don't you feel like that?"

"Well; yes, time hangs heavier on one's hands, I suppose."

"That's so; without the different meals coming along, as regular as the stars in their orbits, the bettin' on the run, an occasional cocktail, and a hand at poker, we should talk each other stark mad at sea, though I don't know much about the Atlantic. I've been on a *Mississippi* steamer, when I've said nary a word for hours, ex-

cept go you so much better, or call you, or such like talk. Guess I like this ship, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, very much. Have you any idea where Dick Drummond is at this moment?"

"No, have you?"

"Not the remotest; I don't think he wishes me to know where he is."

"Well, now, that's curious; I believe he has exactly the same kind of notion about me."

"Indeed!"

"Fact."

"Would it not be better, don't you think, if he gave us both his confidence—if he trusted us?"

"Guess he does trust us."

"Yes, as far as he can see us."

"'Well, there are many fellers I wouldn't trust as far as that, unless I'd my shooting-iron out before they skipped."

"But, you and I, and Dick Drummond, would do anything in this world for each other?"

"That's so."

"Then why does he not trust us?"

"Don't he?"

"I think not."

"But don't you think we ought to trust him?"

This was a poser.

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, give him his head and let him run."

"If you think his head would not be the better for the counsel of other heads—two are better than one, the proverb says, therefore, three must be better than two."

"That depends."

"Upon what?"

"Whether Dick thinks so or not."

"Is that how you feel about it?"

"Guess it is; dinner's on the table—"

The sea, which had been rough during the day, calmed down at night. After dinner many passengers went on deck. The weather was cold, the sky full of stars. We put on our heavy coats, Wilkess and I, lighted our cigars, and sat in the shadow of one of the starboard-side boats. There was quite a little crowd of passengers

near us, some of them ladies, wrapped up to their eyes in shawls and rugs.

For a time we walked about, with our thoughts and our cigars, and took in scraps of the conversation of those who were talking upon public and international subjects. Several Americans were comparing notes about what they would see in England. Some of them were making first trips across the Atlantic. Their views seemed to interest Wilkess.

"It is all so different from what one expects, I guess; seems to me I can't imagine any city much different from Chicago, New York, or Tombstone; they may be older, but I guess a city's a city. Tombstone's only a one-horse city at present, but that's the only difference between Tombstone and Denver; there are one-horse cities and two-horse cities, and so on."

"Yes; but your one-horse cities are cities of wooden shanties, and ours are nearly as old as your hills, and are built as if they were meant to stand until doomsday."

"Is that so? What are they built of?"

"Stone and brick, wood and iron, and cement, and old oak, and some of them were ancient long before America was discovered."

"So! Is that a fact?"

"It is. When I was a lad, I used to visit a friend whose house stood near an archway that was built by the Romans before Christ."

"That cocktail has put new life into you."

"Yes, it certainly has."

"Well, you keep it for the next game of poker; it don't amuse me to have you come old Baron Munchausen over me."

"I am not telling you that which is not true."

"Tell me there's anything in your darned old country as old as five or six hundred years, standing outside a museum?"

"Yes, more than eighteen hundred years."

"Well, I guess even that ain't older than the Rockies, eh?"

"No."

"Well, then, who cares for that darned old arch, I don't. London's considerably bigger than Chicago, I guess, but don't pack as much pork, eh?"

"I can't say," I replied, without paying much attention to his question.

"Any corn elevators in London?"

"Hundreds," I said.

"I guess not; Chicago ain't more'n four or five."

"Hundreds?" I asked.

"Hundreds!" he exclaimed; "what are you figuring on; why, do you know what it costs to put up one?"

"I beg your pardon," I said, "I was thinking of something else—and oddly enough, the gentlemen who are talking so loudly on our right are discussing a subject I have thought a great deal about."

"You don't say? What's the subject?"

"The psychology of crime. Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and M. Despine, a Frenchman, are the authorities quoted by the one who appears to know most of the matter."

"Holmes is a Yank; I'll bet on Holmes," said Wilkess.

"Let us smoke and listen," I said, "the speaker evidently desires an audience."

And this is what we heard, or words to this effect:

"Horace declares anger to be an insanity of short duration, and that is Despine's doctrine of passion. Now, while a man ought to bear everything rather than do wrong, some things are too much for him to bear; the forces with which nature has endowed him are beyond his control."

"Do you know, my friend," I said, taking his arm and leading him away, "that touches the very heart of the subject I wanted your advice about this afternoon?"

"That's curious," said Wilkess, "and what is most curious is your being afraid to trust me."

"I am the depository of a secret that concerns our dear friend of Drummond's Gulch," I said.

"That's a thing we can't go shares in, eh?" he replied.

"True; but without inviting you to such a partnership, let me ask you a question between ourselves."

"Yes, fire away."

"You and I would do almost anything for Dick Drummond?"

"I guess so."

"Now supposing you had solemnly promised him that you would not reveal to any one a certain purpose of his, and supposing that you afterward, on the very best information, came to the conclusion that by breaking your promise you would best serve his interest and promote his happiness, what would you do?"

"*Ask his permission* to chuck the whole thing up."

"But if you could not see him again in time to ask him?"

"Why, guess I should stand by my word," said Wilkess.

"If it involved a question of life and death?"

"That depends whether it involved a question of life and death at first," said Wilkess.

"May I ask you a question as to your knowledge of my relationship with George—I mean with Dick—Drummond?"

"When you've made up your mind what his name is, why, yes."

"Has he confided to you the purpose of his visit to England?"

"Not yet."

"Well, then, the promise I made him *did* involve a matter of life and death at the outset. The position of the parties is not changed since we entered into our bond to each other. But—and I want your emphatic opinion on this point—since I gave him my promise I have had time to weigh the matter between us, and I am certain that if I depart from the strict tenor of my word to him, it will be for his good, and may perhaps save his life. Now ought I, under these circumstances, to keep my word?"

"Was there a money consideration?"

"Well, yes, partly, I am bound to say there was."

"Would the money consideration go with the forfeiture of your word?"

"Not necessarily, and yet rather than harm should come to Drummond, I would give up every penny my meeting with him has put me in possession of."

"Did he know he risked his life, or have you discovered that since?"

"He knew it."

"And had counted the risk in with the thing he bargained for?"

"Yes."

"Then you bet he knows what he is about."

"And you think I am bound by my word?"

"Guess you are."

"And you would not have me break my promise to him even to save his life?"

"If it was certain death and no advantage to him, and a trap was sprung on him as he didn't calculate on, I would save him at any cost."

"Yes," I said; "but if—"

"Well, if the position has not changed since he reckoned it up on all sides, including the risking, as you say, of his own life, which was a factor in what you would call the enterprise, then you would be untrue to your friend and a dishonest loafer to go again' your word given to him, solemnly as you say, he in his right senses, and you in yours."

"I wish you could have thought otherwise."

"I can neither think different to that, nor say different on the supposititious case you have put to me—of course, we will consider it a sort of illustration in a controversy, and as concerning nobody."

"Thank you, yes; that is my desire."

"Well, then, that being over, let's have a drink. I guess you let your heart run away with your head, Mr. Maynard. Never do that in a business transaction, never at poker, nor when dealing in futures."

"Ah, my friend," I replied, "it is hard work to deal coolly in futures when the life of your dearest friend may be a factor, as you say, in the enterprise."

"The man who deliberately puts up his own life as part of the stakes is supposed to have calculated the chances, and to have made an estimate of the return he's to get if he wins. Men don't often stake their lives for scrip; Dick Drummond is not likely to—he's gotten all he wants in that way; perhaps it's a woman, perhaps it's getting even with a darned skunk; but whatever it is, don't you be afeard for Dick. He's carried his life in his hand these five years to my knowledge, and if he can carry it safely through the country he has fought in and bossed with big Injuns agin' him, and some tough shooting besides on the frontier, and in the mountains, don't you be scared for him in England."

When we said good-night, an hour or two later, I found myself inclined to believe that this strong-headed and devoted friend of Margaret's lawless brother was really in George's secret, a brother vigilant in the intended lynching of Fitzherbert Willoughby, otherwise Chingford Lucas.

CHAPTER III.

THE BANKER OF TOMBSTONE ARRIVES IN ENGLAND.

"AND this is the Mersey?" exclaimed Wilkess on a bright morning toward the end of October, as we slipped quietly past Birkenhead, and sighted the spires and towers and the long stretch of docks that mark out the lines of the Northern Port.

"Sure enough," I said; "and on the other side of the river is Liverpool."

It was only an hour or so after daybreak, the sun was just getting up, many of the passengers were still abed.

"Liverpool!" he said, lighting a cigar, and lolling by the gangway stairs on the upper deck. "I tell you, Mr. Maynard, this is to me a wonderful sight. There are thousands of Americans who have continually the name of Liverpool on their lips, and have no notion what it is like."

The great steamer plowed up the river, the green banks of the Birkenhead side now giving place first to pretty homes, then to warehouses and wharves; the Liverpool side frowning with solid stone docks that have a prosaic touch even to the forest of masts that pointed upward to the sun.

"Looks like a marine city that had been built five hundred years, and was guaranteed to stand till Gabriel sounds his trumpet," said Wilkess.

"And yet it is what we call a modern city."

"You do, eh?"

"The first dock was built only a hundred and thirty odd years ago."

"Do you call that modern?"

"Well, yes," I said, "considering that we know Roger de Poictier built a castle here eight hundred years ago, and that the cluster of little homes that surrounded it was the original Liverpool, we don't think there is anything ancient in docks built in 1709."

"Eight hundred years ago!" he said, his honest eyes turned upon me; "why, America, anyhow our America of the stars and stripes and freedom, ain't more'n a year or two over a hundred years old."

"That's *true*."

"It's difficult to take that in, ain't it? I've heard of these dates and read of 'em, and could never see it; but Lord, look at the steeple of that old church; guess that might be any age. But it's kinder gloomy, eh, the whole thing?"

"No, this is a fine clear autumn morning."

"You don't say!" he exclaimed, "but the river's brown, and so's the sails of the boats, and these tugs that are trying to keep alongside us and can't, guess they look dirty, eh?"

"They are not as neat and trim as the steam craft one sees in New York harbor?"

"No, nor off San Francisco, nor on Lake Superior," he said; "but it all looks solid, no fun, work, work—and the home of sea dogs—what?"

"Two hundred years ago Liverpool was a fishing village; now its population is over half a million, and the dock estate collects an annual revenue of five million dollars for shipping dues."

"Ah, that's big, you bet!" said Wilkess, and he became so absorbed in his first view of the river, the city, and the people, that he hardly spoke any more until we landed.

"Solid!" he said, as we drove through the streets to the depot; "solid, and the stores chokeful of goods, the people as solid as the streets."

He was struck with amazement at everything; but when he saw the cars and the locomotives he laughed.

"Why," he said, "they look like the playthings of a giant; you don't say them's the cars, and that's the engine?"

"Yes."

"I should smile!" he said; "why, they ain't no bigger than the narrow-gauge cars at the Bonanza mine in California."

"Oh, yes, they are," I said; "the wheels, you see, are below the platform—that makes the cars look small."

"But the engine!" he said; "Jerusalem, why, how fast can it go—I mean how slow?"

"Sixty to seventy miles an hour!"

"Guess I've a pony at Tombstone would give it points," he said, chuckling.

But he did not laugh as we dashed through the Peak country at a steady speed of nearer seventy miles an hour than sixty. And he vowed he had never seen anything so green as the meadows, and *nothing so sweet* as the pretty homes that studded the hill sides

and decorated the valleys with their little gardens full of autumn flowers.

The London lamps were lighted as I drove him to the hotel in Covent Garden, at which he had been advised to stay. I was anxious to see him comfortably fixed before I went home to Doughty Street.

"When you are through fixing things, take a cab, and come up to my mother's house," I said.

"Guess I'll be through in an hour or so; then I'll just take a look round, and come if I won't be intruding."

"Not at all; no ceremony, my mother is the dearest old lady in the world, and the kindest."

I gave him the number, instructed him as to cabs, and then rattled away to Doughty Street.

Home again! my heart was beating with delight. Would Margaret be with my mother? How slowly the cab seemed to go.

"Can't go no faster," said the driver in response to my urgent demands that he should get along; "my 'oss ain't a locomotive, and it ain't a flying-machine."

The dear, old, somber streets, how I loved them! A cruel city, yes, no doubt, too big to be otherwise; but how one loves it. How one loves the memories of the great men who loved it, and who walked about these very thoroughfares!

Threading his way through Drury Lane, odoriferous Drury Lane, gas-flaring, slip-shod Drury Lane; then out into Long Acre, across Oxford Street, and the cabman was soon proceeding along through quiet squares, and though it seemed hours, he had probably not taken more than twelve or fourteen minutes to awaken the echoes of Doughty Street—once a fashionable part of London, always a respectable, sober, and even dignified locality.

I had telegraphed to my mother from Liverpool. But what is this, the place all in darkness! "This House to Let!" My heart sunk unto my boots; I turned giddy.

The next moment from the depths of despair I leaped to the highest heaven of delight. The numbers of the houses had been changed; the house that was "to let" was not my mother's house. On the contrary, the windows were lighted up. Yes, I was expected.

As my cabman pulled up for the second time and at the right

house, I saw the blind drawn aside and a face peer out into the night.

"Was it Margaret?" I asked myself.

I felt my heart beating wildly.

Before the cabman had time to ring the bell, my mother was at the door; before she had time to speak, she was in my arms.

"Mother!" I said.

"My son!" she sobbed.

"Ah, how glad I am to be with you again, mother!"

"God bless you, my dear boy."

Then I put my arm round her, and we walked together into the house.

It was nearly ten o'clock. There was a bright fire on the hearth. Dishes and glasses and wine were laid on the snow-white covering of an old oak table. The portrait of my father filled a panel over the mantel-shelf.

My mother—pale, handsome, with white hair, gray eyes, a noble figure, a gentle carriage—was dressed in black silk, with a white lace polonaise over her shoulders, and looked the very picture of a highborn English matron.

She noticed that I glanced around the room, inquiringly.

"Ah, it is not enough that I am here," she said, in a soft voice that had no rebuke in it; "here is her portrait."

She took from a cabinet that stood between the two windows of the room a portrait in a morocco case and handed it to me.

"How beautiful!" I exclaimed, turning aside to kiss it.

"Indeed, you may well say so, my dear, she has greatly improved," said my mother.

"I could not have thought it possible," I said; "and where is she, mother?"

"Making a tour of the provinces."

"Acting?"

"Oh, yes."

"I wish I had known."

"Why? That you might have gone straight to her and have neglected your mother?"

There was more of banter than reproach in the question.

"Ah, mother," I said, "you know how I love you. But you can judge how much I want to see Maggie."

"*And so you* shall to-morrow. Here is a letter from her."

She handed me a sealed envelope. I opened it.

"May I read it now, mother?"

"Yes, I suppose you will eat no supper until you have," she said.

I read as follows:

"MY OWN DEAR HICKORY: How very happy you must be to get home again after your travels and troubles, and oh how happy I am to be writing this to you to welcome you back.

"It is not quite settled whether we shall finish the last week of our tour, or return to London, as there is some misunderstanding with the managers (there always is, my dear), and we may 'back out,' father says, of the closing week and go home; and if that is so, I may see you in town nearly as soon as you read this; but, dearest, if I do not I shall send your dear, kind mother a telegram; of course it will be for you, so that you shall know what is settled; and oh, my dear Hickory, how I do long to see you, and how I do rejoice in your success; but I almost wish you had not been quite so successful, because I feel now what a poor little thing I am, and how you might marry some rich, high-born girl, instead of a nameless nobody, as I am; though, my dear Hickory, nobody could love you as truly as I do, and I don't think your mother would let you throw me over—there! She is as fond of me as if I really were her own daughter; ask her, the dear, kind, beautiful old lady.

"If it had not been for the advice, and sweet encouragement and love of your mother, I don't think I could have gone on living with 'papa.' His affairs have not prospered, and he is very irritable, and has been angry with me often when I have refused to line with his friends; but your dear mother has always said everything would come right when you returned, and she has advised patience with her kind arms about me, and her kisses on my cheeks, and I would have been ungrateful if I had not obeyed her. But only I, only myself knows what I have put up with, and only myself knows how sweet and blessed it has been to bear my lot, with the feeling that I was beloved by you, and that I was in the confidence of your mother, and could have her companionship now and then, whenever I was in London.

"I have been in the country, now, for several months, with a very good company from the Olympic Theatre, and I have been playing what we call leading business, with quite a good amount of success. *'Father' has* nothing to do with the arrangements of the

tour, he comes to take care of me, but once in a way he goes to London on business. He has chosen to interfere with the last weeks' dates, owing to some misunderstanding between the managers of two theaters who seem to have got the same dates, and says I shall not play at either place; but he vacillates, and I daresay the tour; will be properly ended; but look for a telegram to say whether it is to be or not, and if it is not to be I shall be in London to-morrow.

"There now, confess, is not this a business-like letter, and I will confess that the hours were never so long since I have owned a watch, as they have been ever since I felt that you would be in England at least a day before we could meet again.

"This to my love, from his ever devoted, true, and affectionate

"MAGGIE."

"CANTERBURY, *October 26th.*"

"Canterbury!" I exclaimed, "why I might get there to-night!"

"But she was leaving Canterbury last night, or early this morning," my mother replied, "and it was not settled whether she came to London, or what she would do; I am sure to have a telegram from her soon. Patience, Hickory, it is no good to worry, you will surely see her to-morrow."

"Very well, mother, I will wait; but in the meantime, let us talk about her. First, read her letter, and see what she says of you."

I watched my mother as she read the letter, and noted an expression of satisfaction on her face with lively pleasure.

Then she entertained me with sympathetic accounts of Maggie, and with her ideas of what we should do, where we should be married, and other matters; and just when I was responding with my own views of these things, one big solemn knock at the door arrested our attention.

"What a knock!" said my mother.

"Yes, I daresay it is my friend Mr. Manwaring Wilkess; they do not have knockers in America, and he has not yet learned the fashionable rat-at-at-at-tat of London."

"Do not have knockers, Hickory?" said my mother, interrogatively.

"*No.*"

"*Then what* does the postman do?"

"I don't know, except that he delivers the letters very much as ours do."

"But not with a double knock?"

"No."

"Then what could our American cousins have made of the song of 'The Postman's Knock,' which somebody wrote not long ago?"

"I daresay it puzzled them as much as the play of 'Wig and Gown,' the title of which represents an institution they do not understand any more than they do Beadledom and Bumbledom."

"Mr. Manwaring G. Wilkess!" said the servant, announcing my American friend, who followed her into the room.

"Mrs. Maynard, how do you do?" he said, without waiting to be introduced, "your son Hickory there invited me to come."

"You are very welcome," said my mother, "I wish you had come earlier; still there is a chicken left, and—"

"Thank you, madam, I have had lunch."

"Lunch!" said my mother, "but it is ten o'clock, Mr. Wilkess, you must surely be hungry!"

"My mother does not understand our American habit of calling a light meal at any time lunch."

"Is that so?" said Wilkess.

"In England, the meal between breakfast and dinner is luncheon," I said; "but my dear mother, Mr. Wilkess calls his supper a lunch, and his dinner a supper."

"How very odd," remarked my mother.

"But I guess we get a good square meal all the same, and there's nothing in a name they say; call a rose a daisy and it smells just the same. I have heard your son called a daisy."

"Indeed!"

"Our folks call any feller they like very much a daisy," he said.

"And a very pretty name too; but will you not take a seat?"

Wilkess was got up regardless of expense, in black broadcloth, white waistcoat, a diamond-pin, and a massive watch chain. He was cleanly shaven, barring the slight gray goatee that gave additional character to his face. His hair had been trimmed, and he had quite a professional appearance, looked legal, or clerical as your fancy dictated.

His face was dark and sallow, and clean cut. It was, as I think I have said before, a strong face, thin, "liney," big nose, a bony

brow, and had deep, steadfast eyes. At first sight, his mouth had a hard look; but it was capable of a pleasant smile, and the more you examined the man, the more you felt that he was one whom you could trust, and whom you might grow to like very much.

"I must thank you for your great kindness to my son, Mr. Wlikess," said my mother; "he needed a friend when he met you."

"We all need friends some time or other, madam," said Wilkess, "I've been there myself."

"You don't mind accepting a mother's thanks, do you?"

"Mrs. Maynard, you honor me, and you must do it in your own way," he said; "but we Americans, if we help a friend, as we have been helped ourselves, and may want it again, we don't look for thanks; but we bow to the ladies, as I do to you."

"Thank you very much," she said; and in the same breath she exclaimed, "ah, there's the knock!"

It was the double rap of the telegraph messenger.

My mother opened the dispatch.

"Read it aloud," I said, "I have no secrets from Mr. Wilkess."

But as I said so, I felt my conscience prodding me with a sudden reminder of the one great secret that I shared with George Newbolde.

"Love and welcome to Hickory; tell him we shall be at Sandwich for a week from to-morrow—will expect him at theatre—best ask for me at stage-door.—M. W."

my mother read.

"Sandwich!" I exclaimed, "does she say Sandwich?"

"Why, Hickory, you have turned quite pale, what is the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, mother; but I was just thinking of Sandwich; and then the joy of knowing she is so near. I think that—"

I found myself stammering.

"I guess Hickory don't like to give tongue to all he feels before me, Mrs. Maynard; when a young feller's in love, he's kinder dainty in his thoughts and ideas; it's human nature," said Wilkess.

"You are a shrewd observer," I said, laying my hand on his shoulder as I stepped toward my mother; "one does feel a great *deal more* than one likes to say about these things, and I am *desperately in love*, that is a fact."

My mother handed me the telegram, and I put it in my pocket.

"Now you want to smoke and have a glass of grog, you two old riends," said my mother; "you will find everything except the igars in the library, and I shall say good-night."

"Are you going to leave us?" said Wilkess, rising.

"Yes, I will say good-night now, but I hope to see you very ften."

"Thank you," said Wilkess, "and good-night, madam."

My mother embraced me, and I led the way into the adjoining oom.

Wilkess pulled a cigar-case from his pocket, I did likewise; here was a small urn hissing hot upon the table, a case of spirit ottles, a lemon, some sugar, a cheerful fire; and the surroundings vere books and pictures, not on an important scale, a prettily draped vindow, and a prevailing air of comfort.

When I had brewed the punch, and we had pledged each other, nd lighted our cigars, Wilkess said—

"That telegram seemed to trouble you; and I thought it scored point somehow in my mind connected with your saying there was o secret between you and me. Excuse me, won't you?"

"Nothing to excuse," I said; go on, you want to say something lse."

"The word Sandwich struck you quite a blow; now that's the lace where you are to be married, and—"

"Oh, you know that," I said, quickly, "how much more do you now?"

"Well, I know that because it is part of my instructions in con- ection with the business I have to do with your family solicitors; nd I'll just put them down in my notes—what's the address?"

"Goodwood and Cummings, Lincoln's Inn Fields," I said.

He wrote down the address.

"Between myself and Dick Drummond," I said, "there is a se- ret understanding which I would like to get rid of."

"You can not," he said.

"Do you know what it is?"

"No."

"Then why do you say I can not?"

Because you are the soul of honor and have given your word, nd an Englishmen's word is his bond."

"*Supposing the keeping* of my word involved—"

"We have thrashed all that out before; it ain't any good doing it again. It seems to me that our friend Dick has only given half his confidence to me. He knows best, and I am satisfied. We have been pals in big things, financial and personal; we've been in corners, and we've fought side by side in speculation, in camp, and where our scalps were in danger. He has always had my confidence, and will to the end; if he wants my purse it is his, my life, too, in any cause in which he risks his."

"Then you know he means to risk his."

"I only guessed at it on board the ship from what you said."

"You believe I would do anything in the world for him?"

"I know he would for you—he told me so."

"When?"

"The day before we sailed."

"In New York?"

"Yes."

"Was he in New York while I was there?"

"Oh, yes, and he was to sail the next day; his vessel's in this morning; he'll be in London to-morrow."

"Will he, indeed!" I exclaimed.

"Did you not know he was coming?"

"Yes."

"And yet when I say he'll be here to-morrow you are agitated, and not with joy, with fear."

I felt that Wilkess could see right into my soul.

"It is true, I do fear his coming."

"Why, for his sake?"

"Yes."

"Now, Hickory Maynard, I am going to ask you a very straight question; if it offends you knock me down, or chuck me out. We boys of the West, who have fought our way with wits and with pistols, taking our lives into our hands on the frontiers and in the Rockies, before the Indians had struck their tents, before the pioneers of Denver on the one hand and Santa Fé on the other; we fellers, I tell you, are cute and quick observers. It is a habit with us, and we generally get on the right track; now and then I grant you we fail, but if we fail we take a back seat and begin again. Now you wanted to encourage yourself on the ship to do something your *ideas of honor* rebelled against, and you hoped I'd back you. When *your dear mother* read out the name of the place where that tele-

gram came from you turned pale; I tell you Dick Drummond will be in London to-morrow and you tremble. Am I right?"

"Yes."

"You don't deny the points on which in combination I am going to ask you a question?"

"I do not."

"Well, then, get your boot ready. Do you mean to betray Dick Drummond?"

He rose as he asked the question.

"Betray him!" I said; "sit down, Wilkess, don't be a fool, ask me what you like, you and I are not going to quarrel."

"I said betray him."

"Yes, and you feel that in asking the question you insult me, eh?"

"More or less."

"To question my honor, to doubt my word, would be to insult me, but you do neither, because you don't know what you mean when you ask the question."

"You are clever, too," he said; "I guess it's the climate; you've brought the brightness of it over here in your brain. When I said betray, and when I put it so strong, I did it to draw you."

"Are you really giving me all your confidence?" I asked.

"I am; and I go back to America to-morrow if Dick don't give me his. But he will at the right time, no doubt. The trouble is you bother me. You try to call him George instead of Dick, and he is painfully on your mind—why?"

"That I fear is my secret. If he consents, I would like to share it with you. If he consents, I would like to break my bond—the row I gave him."

"But you will not do it without his consent?"

"No."

"That's what I want to hear."

"No, Wilkess, I will not, come what may!"

CHAPTER IV.

IS FATE PLAYING INTO GEORGE NEWBOLDE'S HANDS?

WHEN I had bidden Wilkess good-night and closed the door, my mother, in her dressing-gown, came into my room.

"I thought you were in bed, mother, but I am glad you are not."

"I could not retire without another little chat all to ourselves," she said.

"And what do you think of my friend; he is typical of the West?"

"He is a very fine-looking man," she said; "something quite distinguished in his way."

"I am glad you think so, for he is what one would call one of Nature's gentlemen; I am glad you thanked him for being good to me."

"I feel deeply grateful to him, Hickory; he must have a very kind heart."

Then taking my hand in hers as she sat down by my side, she said, "Why did you turn so pale at the mention of Sandwich, my dear?"

How I must have betrayed myself, since my surprise, not to say fear, had been specially noticed by both my mother and my friend.

Let me confess to myself and to the reader that the name fell on my ear like a knell, or like a cry of fear out of a mysterious darkness. All at once I seemed to be conscious of the terrible possibility of some tragic occurrence which I might prevent if I had the courage.

It seemed as if I were for the moment under the spell of an omen, and I shuddered to think that Maggie should be the first to name the scene of that awful calamity, the shadow of which was falling across our lives. It was surely ominous and boded evil that she of all others should ask me to go to Sandwich.

And that she and *he* (the wolf of George Newbolde's story) should be there now. It was as if Fate were playing into George Newbolde's hands, Fate, I say, for I could not then, nor do I now, feel that Providence could have been guiding our strange destinies *during these* memorable days, which belong to the closing chapters *of this history.*

"I did turn pale, I suppose," was the only answer that occurred to me.

"Indeed you did," said my mother, "both I and your friend noticed it."

"Yes, a sudden memory," I said, "something not very pleasant."

I was trying to explain and yet not to explain, deceiving my mother in fact, and I succeeded in doing so. I would have given a year of my life to have felt at liberty to tell her the truth.

"Something you don't care to mention; well, I will not ask you what it is," said the dear soul, "perhaps you will tell me some other day."

"Sandwich," I said, "has rather painful associations for me."

"But Maggie's presence there ought to dissipate them—and why painful associations?"

"I can not fully explain, mother," I said, "but do you not remember that I once spent a vacation in Kent, before I disgraced myself at college?"

"Disgraced yourself, Hickory!" she said.

"Well, before I was plucked; I could not disgrace myself in your eyes, could I, mother?"

"You would not, my dear."

"Not if I could help it."

"You could not fail to help it," she replied.

"But do you remember, mother, how kind the vicar who had a house at Sandwich was to me?"

"Yes, and I forgot to tell you—indeed, I have not had time to tell you—that he called here and left his card only quite lately."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; why are you so surprised?"

"I don't know."

"I thought you had asked him to call?"

"Yes, I suppose I did."

I think I was surprised because I had it vaguely in my mind to seek the vicar's counsel, and the moment Sandwich was mentioned my thoughts went out to him, even before they followed Maggie thither, for I associated my dear girl's happiness with my desire to break away from my vow to George, and the mention of Sandwich conjured up the image of the vicar in the character of our guardian angel.

"Do you remember, mother, the sad story the vicar told me

about that painter, whose pictures I one day took you to see at the auction rooms in Piccadilly?"

"Quite well, love, and the pictures too—one of them was called 'A Corner of Kent,' and another was 'Our Garden,' with two children and a pretty woman."

"Yes; but I believe I had almost forgotten the pictures."

"They belonged to the Montgomery collection," she said; "Sir Thomas Montgomery's pictures and bric-a-brac were sold, you know, when the young baronet lost his fortune on the turf and disappeared."

"I don't remember it," I said, bewildered at this second revelation; "but you shall tell me all about it to-morrow before I go to Sandwich."

And in the morning, sure enough, after a late breakfast, my mother took up the thread of our late chat exactly at the place where she dropped it.

"Don't you remember," she said, "the young Kent baronet, who came into his title and came of age at the same time? There were great doings at the Hall—somewhere near Canterbury I think the family estate is—and there were paragraphs in the London papers. One of them had a leading article about it; a very romantic story they made of it, not only because of what they called the double event, but the more interesting one to follow—he was engaged to Miss Leonora Goulding, the belle of the season. Already Sir Thomas had a name on the turf, young as he was, and his colors had nearly won the Derby. Well, a very brilliant career was predicted for him. As the wedding-day approached the society and other papers had paragraphs about the lady and her beauty, and portraits of Sir Thomas appeared in the illustrated newspapers. You must remember about it."

"Yes, I think I do, now you mention it; he came to utter grief, did he not—made some social mistake as well as financial?"

"He was wild and reckless, no doubt, but that woman ruined him. The day before the morning fixed for the wedding she eloped with the young Count of Ebsworth—she became the Countess a week later—and poor little Sir Thomas was broken-hearted; worse still, society laughed at him as a Parisian audience laughs at a badly treated lover or husband on the stage. He could not stand up against it—he rushed blindly into dissipation—took to drink, gambled, went off his head, indeed, within a year, defaulted on the turf,

the mortgagees foreclosed on his estates, and he disappeared; nobody knows whether he is dead or alive. Poor Sir Thomas."

"How long is this since, mother?"

"Four or five years."

"Really! What a small world it is, and how history repeats itself. Sir Thomas was in that very state of uncertainty when I left Drummond's Gulch. The men did not know whether he was dead or alive, and his wife was bemoaning her fate when I said good-by to her."

"His wife!" exclaimed my mother.

"Yes; Lady Ann was the only woman at the Gulch, and he and she kept the local hotel there."

"Good gracious," said my mother, "an English baronet and his wife keep an hotel at a mining camp!"

My mother's remarks at this time all ran into exclamations.

"Oh, yes," I said, "that is not very remarkable out yonder; the remarkable thing is that you should quite naturally tell me all about the Montgomery's, more particularly the story of Tommy's misfortunes on this side of the Atlantic, and that I should have made his acquaintance beyond the Rocky Mountains—both of us pausing on the uncertainty of his existence. When I left Drummond's Gulch he was on the war-path, poor little fellow, and his wife—"

"What is she like, and who was she?" my mother asked.

"She is a fine woman, and was somebody in San Francisco, I believe."

"Indeed—of good family? But of course not, a landlord's daughter, perhaps, or a barmaid?"

"There are no barmaids in America, mother, and it is a swell thing to be the proprietor of an hotel. Why, there is a proverb which has quite a sting in it which says, 'But he can't keep an hotel.' Ah, mother, I will take you to America one of these days, I am sure you will like the people. They are not hampered with the aristocratic arrangements that trouble us; but they have plenty of pride, I can tell you, and some social cliques, too. They are a fine, noble-hearted, generous race."

"I am sure they are," said my mother.

"And now," I said, "let us speak again of Sandwich, you remember my visit to Sandwich, and the story the vicar told me, all about those poor children, and that brave boy, and how he swore even as a boy to kill that villian, Chingford Lucas."

"I remember it well," she said.

"Then I want to ask you a question," I answered, "because the case applies to an incident I discussed with Mr. Manwaring G. Wilkess. Do you think if that boy and the villain met, say on the arrival of the boy at manhood, he would have the right to kill him?"

"No man has the right to kill another," she said, promptly.

"Not under any circumstances?"

"In self-defense," she said.

"Not to avenge the honor of his family, the murder of his father?"

"The law punishes the murderer in England, and I hope your travels have not warped your views in favor of what is called lynching in America," she said, with just a suggestion of that old-fashioned asperity with which American customs were wont years ago to be discussed in England.

"No; and let me tell you, mother, America has the same laws as ours in regard to murder and manslaughter, and all that; but if the law failed to reach such a ruffian as the man in the vicar's story, and the son killed him, he would not be hanged."

"No," she said, inquiringly, "what would they do to him?"

"The verdict would be as in France, justifiable homicide."

"And he would get off?"

"Yes," I said; "and don't you think he should?"

"Nobody would have any sympathy for the dead person; and if this was a dueling age, and the son avenging his father killed his opponent in what was called when I was a child an affair of honor, then he would have been a hero."

"Ah, different times, different manners," I said.

"Your great-grandfather," she went on, "fought fourteen duels in France, Italy, and England, and killed three of his opponents."

"What for?"

"Oh, about hot words, and love affairs; they fought about trifles in those days; it was war-time, you know, and Captain Oliver Maynard was a dead shot."

"I wish we could push the world back a hundred years for an hour or so, mother."

"Why, my dear?"

"*That the* boy in that story might shoot the wolf of the ruined *home. But there,* we are drifting from business into romance; I

must take a bag to Sandwich, and ought I to send Maggie a telegram?"

"No, she might not get it, and she will assuredly expect you."

"Well, now about the Montgomerys; who are they? I certainly met Sir Thomas at Drummond's Gulch."

"There was an advertisement in the 'Times' lately, inviting him to communicate with his solicitors, and asking for evidence of his death in case he is not living. I noticed it on account of having seen the family pictures with those by the painter of Sandwich among them."

"How curiously and closely the world is linked together," I said, and then I told my mother all I knew about the "Castle" at the Gulch and the story of Lady Ann; and oh! how I wished I dared tell her all about George Newbolde, and the voluntary mission of his life, and so clear up the mystery of Margaret Willoughby and take her advice; though I know what it would have been, and how mean I would have felt had George come to harm through it, or a further vicious triumph for the wolf been the outcome of it. And as for me, I confess I had no compassion for Lucas; I did not regard the contemplated killing of the wretch as a premeditated murder; I believed in it as a well-merited act of revenge, which after all, as a great authority has said, is "a rough justice." My trouble was perfectly selfish. I did not want to be burdened with a life-long secret; I did not want to be separated from George; and I did wish to confer upon Margaret the additional happiness of her restoration to her brother.

"It is quite a coincidence," said my mother, "that you should visit Sandwich again under such strange and happy circumstances."

"To see my sweetheart acting with a party of strolling players; she will be on the stage when I get there. My brother, the honorable member for Barford, would have a fit at the mere suggestion of it."

"We will not talk of him," said my mother, "let us be selfish and only talk of ourselves at present—ourselves and Maggie. It is not so serious a *mesalliance* now to marry with an actress as it was; some ladies of the stage have made great matches."

"But not such a poor, unknown, dear little girl as mine, eh?" I said.

"She was always worthy of a better fortune than that which has accompanied here through life so far; but if she had been differ-

ently placed, my foolish boy would not have met her perhaps, and—"

"What a calamity that would have been for your foolish but happy boy, mother."

"It is fortunate for you that Maggie is not very devoted to her profession."

"Why, mother?"

"I told her you would never consent to her acting any more when she is Mrs. Hickory Maynard; and she said she only lived to make you happy."

"God bless her," I exclaimed, "and you too, mother—how good you have been to me. And now, *au revoir*, I must go."

I embraced her fervently, and she kissed me with tears in her eyes.

"No," I said to myself, as my cab dashed along the busy streets to the railway station, "I should be too jealous, I should resent even the applause of an audience, and the criticism of fellows who discuss actresses over their liquor would set me introducing into Englands the rough and ready reprisals of Drummond's Gulch."

No man who truly loves a woman could surely endure to see her play certain parts on the stage, he being of the audience. It would be a different thing, of course, if he were of the same profession, and even then their exercise of the same art often leads to misunderstandings.

I remember that old newspaper friend of mine who used to give me tickets for the Adelphi, discussing this with me. "If the wife," he said, "is the better artist of the two, she is tempted 'to lead him a life,' and does." He entertained me once for two hours with illustrations in point.

On the other hand, a great French novelist has shown in "Consuelo" how much self-sacrifice is possible on the part of an artist toward an inferior whom she truly loves. I fancy there are as many instances of this kind on one side as the other.

But such questions as these could never arise between Margaret and the lover who was chafing at the slowness of the train, and trying to occupy his mind with nothing but thoughts that belonged to her and to our future.

"Sandwich! Sandwich!" at length rang out through the darkness; *for it was* eight o'clock when I arrived.

"*Is Henry Jones* still a porter here?" I asked, my thoughts go-

ing back to George's story, of the man who carried his father's bag, and gave evidence at the inquest.

"Well, yes, sir, he bain't exactly left the service; but he's been off duty this seven weeks."

"Not well?"

"No, sir, and bain't as young as he was."

How strange it seemed that I should be here again, to pick up the threads of that sad story the vicar told me, and to find in it a great romance of real life, with myself as a central figure of its action!

CHAPTER V.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS.

"IT is not a regular theatre, sir," said the waiter at the hotel; "it is down a yard in the second street to the right—you'll see a lamp at the top."

Theatres in most small English towns are always ignominiously placed as if their builders had been ashamed of their work and wished to hide it.

Sandwich had begun its theatrical career, according to tradition, in the slums.

There are, I believe, nevertheless, provincial cities where the theatre has the audacity to look the Town Hall in the face.

This was not the case at Sandwich, though they might have honored the memory of Queen Elizabeth (of which they are very proud) in a respectful recognition of the drama.

"Down the yard and up the passage to the right," said a loiterer, in the street where I found an extra lamp burning, and "To the Theatre Royal," written up.

A hot breeze met me at the door of the theatre, with an odor in it that it might have collected if it had swept over a desert of naphtha and sawdust.

I wanted to see my dear girl without interrupting the play.

My first impulse was to go to the stage-door. But common *sense got the better* of love, and sent me to the regular entrance.

Besides interfering with her work, I might have met Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby, and I was in no mood to put up with his insolence.

I therefore paid my money and took a vacant box (there were three in the house, two occupied, one over the stage still to let), which I entered with curious sensations.

I kept back in the shadow, so that I could see without being seen. The curtain was down. A small, but by no means inefficient orchestra, was playing "Home, Sweet Home," with variations for the first violin.

Peering from my place through an odd little curtained window in the side of the box, my eyes ranged all over the auditorium.

At the back of the dress-circle I saw George Newbolde. No disguise could hide those eyes, and that handsome, though careworn face. He sat with his head leaning against a pillar that supported the gallery.

While my thoughts were all of a sudden divided between this actor on life's real stage, and the mimic world behind the curtain, with for me and for him a more real and interesting heroine than the dramatist had imagined, the curtain went up on the closing scene of the play. It was a melodrama, called "The Miser's Secret," in which "The eminent London tragedienne, Miss Willoughby," played the miser's daughter. The *dénouement*, so far as I could gather, would establish the parentage of the heroine, whose entrance was the signal for rounds of applause.

There were, however, two persons in the house who did not lift a hand, but whose hearts were nevertheless beating with emotion. Not that George Newbolde betrayed any sign of feeling, even to the closest scrutineer. He sat within the shadow of a wooden pillar, and was as immovable as a statue.

My pulses seemed to have stopped their healthful music for a moment, and then to suddenly throb with joy. I felt the blood rush into my face. My eyes feasted greedily upon the dear girl. She had never surely looked so beautiful as at this moment.

I followed her through the action of the dramatic story, dwelling upon her words, and yet hoping that every scene was the last. When, presently, she was acknowledged by her stage-father, and she fell weeping into his arms, I turned to see what effect the scene might have upon the silent figure behind me. The hero of *Drummond's Gulch* had disappeared. I could see him nowhere. He had evidently left the theatre. I hurried out, and found my way to the

stage-door. A liberal tip induced the porter to send in my name to Miss Willoughby's dressing-room, for I had determined not to give her the shock of a sudden meeting.

"She'll come out soon, Miss Willoughby will," said the man, when he had returned to his narrow little box.

"Is that the answer?" I asked; it seemed cold and formal, I thought.

"Yes."

"Was that all she said?"

"It were."

"Did she not ask me to come to her?"

"No."

"Nor request me to wait?"

"'Ang it all, I've told you all she said, what could you expect the lady to say more; she were a-dressing as 'ard as she could, and says she'll be out soon."

How unreasonable love is, how exacting! I was disappointed, almost angry, certainly jealous, all in a moment. I leaned against the door-post, full of doubts and fears.

"Is her father in the theatre?" I asked.

"What, Mr. Willoughby?"

"Yes, yes, her father."

"No, he ain't; leastwise, Mr. Willoughby ain't."

"Why couldn't you say so at first!" I exclaimed, quite ready to vent my sudden ill-temper upon the innocent porter.

"How did I know as he were her father? They've such lots of relations, these traveling stars."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing."

"You do."

"Not I! I ain't paid to mean anything."

"You are a confounded impudent fellow."

"There's a many o' the same sort about," he replied, busying himself with a saucepan in which something savory was being stewed on a slow fire.

Several slipshod persons came from behind the scenes and passed between us as I stood fuming there with my pride under this common stage-porter's feet. They were supers and scene-shifters. One of them uttered a coarse jest as he went into the street, and the rest laughed *coarsely at it.* And I am to take my wife from such a place

as this! I wonder if that cruel thought would have come into my mind if I had not felt piqued at my darling's curt message. Presently a well-dressed gentleman came out into the flickering light of the porter's lamp. I guessed him to be the leading man of the company. He appeared to be a dignified person. He said good-night with a lofty air, and the porter responded very humbly. This somewhat neutralized the bad effect on my mind of the persons who had preceded him.

"Hickory! my dear Hickory!" suddenly broke upon my miserable reflections like a burst of sweet music on a lonely forest path.

It was Maggie!

The next moment she was in my arms. I saw that surly porter look up with a scowl of contempt. What did I care? I would have hugged her before all the world.

"Let me look at you!" I presently exclaimed, holding her now at arm's length, the light full upon her dear face. How pretty it was, how gentle, how joyous, how bright her eyes, how beyond all description charming!

I was beside myself with joy.

"Well," she said, merrily, "well. Have I changed much?"

"My darling, yes, you have—you are sweeter and more lovely than ever. Come, let us get out of this. I am making a fool of myself. Come, let me take you home."

She was wearing a long black cloak, a dark bonnet with a white rose in it, her chin rested upon a great fluffy lace fichu. If she had looked lovely upon the stage in white satin and splendid paste diamonds, how much more attractive was she to me in this quiet, unpretentious walking attire.

"Come, then," she said, taking my arm, and hurrying me out into the dimmed porch that protected the stage-door from the north wind; "you may kiss me once more."

I did.

"You can not dream how happy I am!" she said. "I could not ask you to come in there behind, it is such a dirty prosaic place, a little country theatre; and besides, I had not a dressing-room all to myself—the first old woman dressed with me. And now tell me how you are. When did you come? Why didn't you write and tell me you were coming? How did you know I was here?"

She asked me a hundred questions, and I pressed her arm in *mine, and upbraided* myself mentally for letting my impatience to

see her create the shadow of a doubt about her. It was an autumn night, dry and fine. There was no moon; but thousands of stars seemed to look down upon us with friendly eyes.

"Let us walk the longest way home, Maggie," I said, pressing her arm. "Oh, if you knew how I have dreamed of this night, and longed for it."

"And I too, dearest," she replied, in a low, gentle voice.

"You have? It is sweet music to hear you say so, my dear Maggie. We will never part again, will we?"

"I hope not," she said.

We were passing along a dark street, a street full of the shadows that old gabled houses cast upon narrow footways. I stole my arm around her waist and kissed her. She laid her head upon my shoulder, her plump, soft hand in mine, her breath upon my cheek, and I forgot all the world but her in those tender moments.

"Life would not be worth having without love, would it?" I whispered.

"No, dear," she said; "but we must go home, father will be angrier than usual, especially if he sees you."

And we stepped out once more beneath the stars.

It was more than the shadow of the gabled houses that fell upon me now.

"You still call him father?"

"Yes, dear."

"But he is not your father?"

"He is my step-father," she said.

"You do not care for him?"

"I dislike him very much," she said; "I could almost say I hate him, but that would be wrong."

"No, Maggie, it would not, he merits your hatred."

"He is not a good man," she said; "I think I should have left him had I not met you, love. Your mother has been a great comfort to me."

If she had only known all that I had learned of her and him since our last meeting!

"Let us hurry now, dear," she said, "since you are quite resolved to take me in, and meet him."

Another dark corner—a dear old place for lovers, that same Sandwich.

"We will say good-night, then," I said, "before we enter the house."

It was a long, sweet good-night, compensation for a world of troubles, a lifetime of sorrows past, of trials and dangers that might await us in the future.

As we knocked at the Willoughby door, a man came along the street on the other side of the way, and paused. It was the hero of the coach-ride to Leadville. I caught a glimpse of his face as the door opened. George Newbolde was keeping watch over the wolf and the lamb.

CHAPTER VI.

FACE TO FACE WITH THE WOLF.

MR. FITZHERBERT WILLOUGHBY, who had been toasting his elegantly slippered toes at a quiet wood fire in an open grate, rose as we entered.

He laid down a newspaper, and stuck an eye-glass in his right eye.

"Mr. Hickory Maynard, papa," said Maggie, answering the inquiring gaze of his pinky eyes and haughty manner.

"Indeed, and to what are we—haw—indebted for the honor of this visit?" he replied, in a harsh voice, and with a freezing manner.

"Mr. Maynard will explain," said Maggie, ringing the bell.

A servant entered.

"Please bring my supper to my room," she said.

We had arranged this method of procedure on our way from the theatre.

I had told Maggie that I had been successful beyond my most sanguine hopes; that I was prepared to fulfill all the Wolf's conditions in regard to our marriage; and she agreed with me in the opinion that I should not lose an hour in coming to an understanding with him. She thought that "for the sake of peace" it would be best to have his consent, though she left this in my hands; "I *am yours,*" she had said; "take me when you will and where you *will.*" She had yet to learn that Sandwich was the home of her

birth; that her name was Newbolde, and it was desirable that Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby should confess these things and sanction the registration. Not that it was necessary, but "for the sake of peace" (to quote one of Maggie's favorite phrases), I resolved to smooth the path to the altar, and to have nothing mar the happiness of the time so far as Maggie was concerned.

"So you have come back," said Willoughby, in a scornful way, the moment Maggie had left the room.

He was not changed in appearance since I last met him. The same reddish head and whiskers, the same hard, cruel mouth, the same small pinkish eyes, set close together, the same affected manner.

His dress on this occasion was a black velvet coat, gray trousers, and crimson slippers; and as he raised his hand to adjust his eyeglass his fingers sparkled with diamond rings.

"Yes, I have returned," I said.

"A rich man, I conclude, or you would not have the audacity to show—ah—to show your face here."

It is quite possible there was an air of defiance in my manner that galled him.

"Why here in particular?" I asked. "Is there anything special in Sandwich that makes my daring to come back more audacious than if I had called upon you in Buckingham Street, Strand?"

Now that I really knew what an out-and-out blackguard I had to deal with, I found my whole nature rebelling against him. I felt as if I were a coward and a humbug for even condescending to hold a parley with him; but it was best I should "for the sake of peace."

"When I said 'here,' I meant, sir, in this room—in my house, wherever it might be, Sandwich, London—ah—Paris, Berlin—under my roof, sir."

"Indeed," I said, returning his impertinent gaze; "I thought you referred to Sandwich."

"You have been here before?"

"Yes, I know Sandwich."

"Then you know a very interesting and historical old town—"

"Very," I said, interrupting him; "but I did not come here to talk of antiquities, though I remember there is a fine old house here where Queen Elizabeth was entertained, the Manse it is called, I think."

"Yes," *he said,* "I have been over it."

"Lately?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; but as you say you are not here to talk of Sandwich —ah—perhaps you will be good enough to disclose the—ah—the purpose of your visit."

"It has reference to our last interview, and it is very convenient that we meet again, not in London, but in Sandwich of all places in the world."

"And why in Sandwich?" he asked, slowly, and evidently pulling himself together, mentally and physically.

"Because, before I returned to England I had resolved to be married at Sandwich."

We had been standing until now. With this opening shot of the coming battle, I sat down.

He surveyed me calmly, and dropped, with a jerk, the glass from his eye.

"May I smoke?" I asked, producing a cigar-case.

"Yes, you have made money, and it has—ah—given you the insolence of manner that is too often its accompaniment, when—ah—the possession is novel."

I felt I "had him on toast," as the saying is, and while at first I felt my blood boiling against him, I now became perfectly calm. I realized the power I held over him, the power of a full knowledge of him, with the nerve that money gives, when you have to lean your back against it.

"And whom are you going to marry?" he said, answering in the negative my proffered cigar-case with a contemptuous wave of his sparkling right hand.

"May I smoke?" I said, pretending not to hear him.

"No, sir; damn it, sir, you may not smoke!" he answered, drawing himself up to his full height, his pinky eyes flashing.

I looked up at him, measuring his possible strength, and almost wishing he would attack me. But that thought was immediately replaced by the reflection that I had a great deal to say to him, and that the moment was not ripe for an assault.

"Not at present?" I said, laying my cigar-case on the table; "later on; very well."

"You have the manners of a bear, sir," he said, trying in vain to control himself. "Do you know—ah—do you know to whom *you are talking, sir?*"

"*Quite well,*" I answered.

Visions of George Newbolde, visions holding up warning fingers, flashed through my mind; but I could not forego the triumph of watching the effect of those two words.

He winced at this shot, and I followed it up.

"Yes, quite well," I repeated.

"What do you mean, when you say you know me quite well, by putting such an emphasis as you put upon the word 'quite'?"

He had forgotten for a moment his affected stammer or hesitation of speech, his parenthetical "ah," which so many asses and knaves cultivate in England.

"I mean exactly what I say."

"And what do you know?"

"Of you?" I asked, carelessly.

"Of me," he said.

"Oh, nothing that is creditable to you."

He made a step toward me, and then retreated to his place on the hearth-rug, but I noticed that he planted his feet down firmly and stiffened his upper lip.

"You are a—"

He paused.

"Go on, I don't look for compliments from you."

"No, sir, you shall not make me lose my temper, it would distress my child—ah—and out of respect for her and for myself, I bandy no further words with you. What is your business? ah—state it, or permit me to ring for the servant, that she may show you out."

The clever scoundrel changed his tactics. He saw that I was getting the better of him in the matter of temper. But I soon raised his ire again beyond his control.

"Very well," I said, "I am here to inform you that I intend to marry the young lady you are pleased to called your daughter this very week, and at the parish church of this very interesting and historical town of Sandwich."

It was not, I suspect, the words so much as the manner in which I uttered them that troubled Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby.

He drew his breath quickly, walked to the door, locked it on the inside, put the key in his pocket, and then confronted me, his sickly face pallid with excitement.

I noted his doings without moving.

"Now look here, Mr. Maynard, you think you know something about me that gives you the right to be insolent. What is it?"

He stood over me in a threatening attitude.

"Is it necessary that we should talk with locked doors?"

"It is necessary that you should explain yourself before you leave this room."

I shrugged my shoulders.

There was a knock at the door.

"Not yet, dear," he said, in the blandest tones. "Not yet; Mr. Maynard and myself are arranging matters. Go to your room, we will desire your presence soon, unless you are tired and would prefer to go to bed."

He unlocked the door as he spoke, and looked out, then again locked it stealthily.

"Well, Mr. Hickory Maynard, is it to be war or peace between us?"

"As you please, but for Margaret's sake peace would be preferable."

"On what conditions?"

I thought of my bond with Newbolde.

"We marry here, at once, and leave England for a long Continental tour."

"And what becomes of me?"

"Heaven is good. It will no doubt take care of you as heretofore."

"You do not speak to me in this way on the strength of your money, Mr. Maynard. You are much changed since last we met."

"If you mean I no longer fear you, yes, I am. I have seen the world."

"Yes, I see you have. Now listen to me. My daughter will never marry without my consent. That consent must be paid for handsomely, since the man who takes her from me robs me of my income."

"Indeed; I thought you gave out that you are a man of means, that you permit Margaret to act because it amuses her."

"You thought a lie, sir—do you hear, sir?"

He bore himself threateningly, his right hand extended toward me. I sat perfectly still, though I was on the alert to defend myself.

"*I am not deaf,*" I said; "let us get back to the point. You

want to be paid for giving your consent to the marriage of your—of the young lady upon whose earnings you live?"

"Curse you!" he hissed, his face close to mine; "what is it, I ask you again—what is it you think you know about me that you dare to insult me in this way?"

I rose to my feet and pushed back my chair that I might have space to respond to any sudden attack, for the Wolf's bristles were up, and he showed his teeth.

"I will tell you what it is," he went on in a hoarse whisper; "if you and I were in Seville, one of us would be missing in the morning."

"Why in Seville any more than in Sandwich?" I replied, putting myself on guard; "this interesting city has a sufficiently cut-throat look for any deed, and the river I have heard is deep."

He had stooped toward me when he threatened. He now lifted up his head, and steadied himself with his hand upon the table. I still stood in an attitude of defence, and had my eyes fixed upon his, or on their sockets, for he had closed them as if to take counsel with his thoughts.

"What fools we are—ah—to quarrel," he said, presently, flinging himself into the easy chair from which he had risen at my entrance; "let us talk rationally; we are business men, let us look at every side of the question we are met to discuss."

"May I smoke?" I asked.

"By all means."

"Can I offer you a cigar?"

"Thank you."

I struck a match, and offered it to him. He took it, lighted the cigar he had condescended to accept from my hands; I lighted mine, reseated myself, blew a cloud toward the mantel-shelf, and waited.

"Supposing I refuse my consent to this marriage?" he asked.

"It will take place without it."

"Indeed," he said; "but you wish for my consent, and propose terms?"

"Yes."

"And I am willing to do whatever is best for my daughter, and—ah—since you are rich, why, you have the right to ask for the fulfillment of my promise to consider your proposals. You are rich?"

"I have been successful, and can satisfy the condition you imposed upon me."

"Good; but why you should have put me out of temper I cannot understand—ah—why I should have resented your return I hardly know; but that is over, and as—ah—a gentleman, permit me to apologize."

"No need to apologize," I said; "I do not propose that we should be friends."

"Oh, indeed—then what do you propose?"

Again a little ruffled and fidgety.

"You want my conditions? The terms upon which I am willing to buy your unnecessary consent to this marriage—because Margaret prefers to have it, and to take her leave of you with at least a show of amity?"

"Go on, sir; I hoped I was dealing with a gentleman."

"You are dealing with a man of business, sir, who knows what he wants, and means to have it."

He threw the remainder of his cigar into the fire.

"Excuse me," he said, "you smoke damn bad tobacco."

He was bound to explode on something, despite his resolve to be quiet. How I must have tortured the scoundrel!

"Ah, my taste needs refinement I dare say; too strong for you—very sorry. But time flies."

"Go on, your conditions; let us bring this interview to an end; it is most disagreeable to me."

"Sorry for that; I find it rather pleasant."

He rose from his chair, thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked about the room. I pulled him up with a jerk.

"I am listening, sir," he said.

"My first condition is, that Margaret shall be married in her proper name—"

"Her proper name!" he exclaimed, standing still.

"And that you shall tell her she is not your daughter."

"What!"

"Do I not make myself understood? I will speak plainer then."

"Do, sir," he said, facing me.

I rose to my feet, and flinging my cigar after his, said—

"*I will!* My wife's maiden name will be registered as Margaret *Newbolde!*"

His first impulse was to spring at my throat; his next was to do nothing of the kind.

After rocking himself to and fro for a moment, he suddenly steadied himself, and waved his hand as much as to say "it is all over." Then he unlocked the door, and laid the key on the table.

"The game is yours," he said; "but answer me this—did she know you held that card?"

"No. Shall I tell her?"

"Not yet."

"And what is your next card?"

"I have not decided—you play next; I can tell you my last."

"What is your last, then?"

"I call it Chingford Lucas."

He staggered.

"Yes, that takes the pool," he said.

Then with an effort, mental and physical, he whispered hoarsely:

"Give me a few minutes. Leave it to me. Don't tell her until I have cleared out; give me a drink, you seem to have paralyzed me. You played the game like a professional."

"That is brandy, I think, on the table."

"Thanks."

He drank half a tumblerful, pulled himself together, went to the door, and called Maggie down from her room.

"There, darling, say 'Good-night' to Mr. Maynard. We have settled everything. Your marriage takes place at the end of the week."

She looked at both of us inquiringly.

"Don't stop now, love. It is very late," he said. "Mr. Maynard will call in the morning.

I followed her into the hall, and whispered hastily in her ear, 'Lock and bolt your door. Do not be persuaded to open it on any account;" for I had a sudden inspiration of fear.

"Good-night, sir," said the Wolf. "Don't ask me to extend this interview. We breakfast at ten. I hold myself at your command."

As I walked to my hotel, I rather blamed my haste in showing my hand, and it occurred to me that I had scarcely been true to my word given to Newbolde.

I did not go into the hotel. I walked back to the street I had just left. *Lucas might* avenge himself on Maggie. I stood before

the house. The lights were all out. The street was still as death, and dark as pitch. Not even a reveler disturbed the silence. In the distance the gas-lights disappeared one after the other. They were economical in the matter of gas at Sandwich.

"Maynard," said a voice I knew, and a hand was laid upon my arm, "you were indiscreet, but I forgive you. I envy you. But *I* play the next hand."

"George," I said, "is it you?" For God's sake, let this affair rest here."

"I shall," he said. "I shall."

"But let your sister know she has a brother."

"No, no. I claim the fulfillment of your bond. If you think that I shake it by speaking to you, consider that it is a stranger who addresses you—a vessel at sea has signaled you in the night; you have spoken her; and there is an end."

There was no resisting him. He thrilled me as he spoke. It was as if he had annexed some supernatural influence with his vow.

"She is safe—go—be happy."

It was as if I had encountered a spirit. My mind was already in a state of unusual excitement.

When he laid his hand on me, it was as if Fate touched me.

There was a something in the man's manner and voice that held me spellbound.

CHAPTER VII.

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the villainy of this Chingford Lucas, I still felt a desire to save him, or rather to save George from his contemplated crime.

I think there was some selfishness in my views of the situation. If the two men had been in the Rocky Mountains together, I believe I should have taken no trouble to check the work the Boss of Drummond's Gulch had set himself to do. But in England I feared a scandal, a trial for murder, and, perhaps, the execution of the man *to whom* at that moment I was indebted for everything—my sweetheart's brother; and, as the first part of his programme was the

wedding in the parish church, my immediately prospective brother-in-law.

The reader will not be surprised that on the next morning I made another effort "for the sake of peace."

Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby was out of the way when I called.

"He is very strange," said Maggie.

"How strange, my dear?"

"His manner toward me is different. He said this morning that he would breakfast at the hotel; that he did not care to meet you again at present; that everything is to be settled as you wish; and that, as for him, his day is over."

"His day *is* over," I said, repeating her words with special emphasis, for they seemed to be curiously linked with George's motto, "The day will come."

"Yes, those were his words."

"And how did he say them?"

"As a man might who in some great enterprise had been beaten at all points."

"What was their effect upon you, Maggie? How did your heart interpret the change in his manner?"

"As a prisoner might," she answered, "who sees her jailer powerless to close the door against her."

"My darling," I exclaimed, "how you must have suffered!"

"Yes, dear, I have a little," she said.

"And yet how beautiful you are!"

She wore a gray print gown buttoned to the throat, white linen collar and cuffs; her hair was plainly dressed, and her face was as fresh as if a stage "make-up" had never touched it.

"You love me, don't you?" she said.

"With all my heart!" I exclaimed.

"And that is why you think me beautiful!"

The servant, who was just then entering with a breakfast tray, pretended not to see that I hastily withdrew my arm from around Maggie's waist.

"How can I eat any breakfast?" I said, when at last we were alone again, and she sat down on one side of a small, round table, I on the other, a kettle bubbling on the fire, a plate of white bread and butter, a dish of eggs, and a brace of partridges, and a plate of watercresses on the table.

"You must, if only out of compliment to the hostess," she re-

plied, handing me a cup of coffee, and wondering, "if you prefer claret, as Mr. Willoughby does—I will never call him papa again now that I am not obliged to."

"It was good of him to go out this morning," I said; "sitting here with you, Maggie, I could, I think, even forgive him, now that all is over."

"At this moment, perhaps; but not if you knew all," she said with a grave face.

"Then you don't forgive him?" I said, and as I asked the question I could not help thinking what would her feelings be if she did know all; and for the moment, the thought seemed to take all the sunshine out of the room, and indeed out of my life.

"No, I can never forgive him," she said, resolutely; "but don't let us talk of him."

Her manner when she said I can never forgive him reminded me of George. There was something in the expression of her face that recalled his.

"How serious you look," she said; "do you want me to forgive him?"

"No," I said; "I do not think he deserves forgiveness."

"But I will forget him, if I can; we will both try and think he never existed."

"Yes," I said; "the mention of him has even changed the tone of your voice."

"And spoiled the birds, one would think," she replied, "judging from your neglect of them; come, sir, give me a little; it is the duty of a hostess to be cheerful, that her guest may enjoy his visit and his breakfast—another cup of coffee? Yes, you must."

Thus the amenities of the breakfast table were restored; and in due course we were sitting cozily on a sofa by the fire, for it was a cold morning in the last week of October.

"And I have a great deal to tell you that is very serious," I said, looking into the glowing ashes at the bottom of the grate, and watching the bluish flame that sparkled with tiny stars from the oak blocks that were burning—they were pieces of old ships that had been broken up.

"Very serious," she said; "you alarm me."

"You will be glad, I think, when you have heard what I have to tell."

"*You are so mysterious.*"

"Not more mysterious, dear, than you were when you told me you were not only an orphan, but nameless."

"You have not forgotten that?" she said, looking into my face in an inquiring manner.

"How could I forget it, dear?" I said, pressing her hand.

"No, it was a startling confession, I suppose," she answered; "and is it about that you want to talk seriously?"

"Yes."

"You frighten me," she answered, rising to her feet; "you have learned something that may part us?"

"No, dear, no," I said, drawing her back into her seat, "nothing but death can ever part us. What I have heard is not bad news, but good news. It is serious news only as it refers to the past; for you, Maggie, it is good news, I might almost say cheerful news."

"Yes?"

"You told me you were nameless?"

"Yes,"

"I have found out your true name."

She drew closer to me, her hand trembled in mine.

"My true name?" she said, echoing my words.

"And your home."

"My home," she said; "my home!"

"The house in which you were born."

"Oh, Hickory, what are you telling me!" she exclaimed.

"Listen, dear, be brave; I know who your father was, where you lived, and where he was buried."

She trembled violently.

"I don't know why I am afraid to hear all you have to tell me," she said, in a low voice, "but I am full of fear."

"You have no cause to fear," I said.

"I am sure I have not, or you would keep the secret you have discovered to yourself. I want to know all, and yet a great alarm seems to weigh upon my heart."

It was a serious time to me, this clearing up of the mystery, but I was very happy—happy even in Maggie's distress, since I found her clinging to me, resting upon me, as it were, and I knew that what I should tell her would be a happiness and a comfort to her. It was a satisfaction to me the feeling that I was master of the situation, and that I was leading her up to that opinion; that she was

about to know and to acknowledge how important a factor I was in her life; that I had done something to make me worthy of her admiration as well as of her love.

"Don't be frightened," I said, kissing her with, I fear, something of the air of a protector, "all that is past. You have no longer any reason to fear. The future will recompense you for the past. I feel sure it will. Now, shall I go on?"

"Yes."

"Don't ask me how I know what I shall tell you, but take what I say as the truth—believe me implicitly when I tell you it is the truth."

"Yes."

She turned her face toward me. I kissed her, and stroked her hair as if she had been a child, and at that moment my feelings toward her were, I think, rather those of father or friend than of a lover on the eve of marriage.

"You were born—now, where do you think?"

"In Germany, Mr. Willoughby said."

"What should you say to Sandwich?"

"I don't know," she replied.

"Have you seen much of Sandwich?"

"Not much," she said.

"Do you know an old, old house, just outside the town, not half a mile from here?"

"Yes, the Manse. I read of it in the Guide Book, and walked round there with my maid to see it the first day we came."

"Did you really?"

"Yes, and we saw papa—Mr. Willoughby—standing by the door and speaking to a man."

"Yes," I said, checking myself from expressing further surprise.

"And he was angry with us—what did I want prowling around the stupid old place?—if I wanted to see the town couldn't he show it me?—and so on."

"Odd he should be there before you," I said; "odd you should have gone there the first day you were here; it is the house where you were born."

She looked at me, and did not speak; then I took her hand, and we both gazed at the fire.

"*Your* father was a painter, his name Edward Barnes Newbolde, and—"

"Stop, oh, stop a moment," she said; "it is like a message from the grave; you have taken up and finished the very words my mother was saying and trying to say when she died."

Tears filled her eyes, and she laid her hand upon my arm to bespeak my silence. She rose and leaned against the mantel-shelf.

"Don't mind me, I shall be better in a moment. Ah, if you had known my poor mother! She was very kind, but very weak, poor soul. Was always afraid of something. Even at last, poor dear, did not dare to say what she wished until it was too late, and—"

Then, after a little pause she wiped her eyes, and said—

"There, I am better now. My father met with an accident; his death was sudden—that is so?"

"Yes, he was drowned."

"Poor dear!" she said; "and I do not remember him at all! But you said you know where he is buried. Then he was not drowned at sea?"

"No; by the bridge, near that old house."

"Oh, how sad! And my mother saw him?"

"No she was not at home."

Another pause.

"And my brother, who was a child when I was a child?"

A pause, this time of my making.

"What did Willoughby tell you of him?" I asked.

"That he was weakly and died. Is that so? Ah, I know it is by your silence. And I am alone in the world!"

"Not alone, Maggie," I said.

She kissed my hands.

"I will be all the world to you, if that is possible, and my mother shall be your mother."

"You are very good to me, and you can never know how kind your mother was to me when you were away, what dear letters she wrote to me."

"She is the best mother I ever heard of, Maggie, and in you, dear, has the most lovable daughter. Come now, try and be cheerful, eh? Look at the bright side of the news I have given you. It has a bright side."

"Yes, yes," she said, "it is full of sunshine; but it is like the saddest time of sunshine, when it is setting. Margaret Newbolde, and that *is my name*; how strange, but how sweet."

"And you shall not part with it altogether, love, even for another; you shall be called Margaret Newbolde Maynard, eh?"

She was silent. I also looked steadily into the fire.

"Don't expect me to talk, Hickory, I feel so sad, and yet so happy. Surely nobody has ever had to listen to such a strange revelation as that you have made to me."

"Truth is stranger than fiction," I said.

CHAPTER VIII.

SURPRISES FOR THE VICAR—SWEETS AND BITTERS.

WITHIN one hour of this conversation with Maggie I was sitting in the vicar's study. Although it was the dead Autumn time of year, I was conscious of the same mixed perfumes as those which I remembered in that season of "leafy June" when first I made the vicar's acquaintance. The last double stocks of the year scented the room from a big brown bowl, and the bees-waxed floor was sweet and aromatic.

"The same dear old room," I said, "the same clean smell of wax and flowers."

"Yes," he said, "and the same old snuff-box at your service."

He handed me his box, and I accepted the old world courtesy.

The vicar had changed considerably since I had seen him last. His hair was whiter, his face thinner, he leaned upon his stick.

"You are thinking I am changed. Nay, no compliments," he said.

"Then I was, my dear friend, if I may call you my old friend."

"You may, indeed. Gout and old age make a wreck of any man; but I am much better than I was a month ago, much better."

"I am very glad to see you again," I said.

"And I you," he answered, taking my hand for the second time; "sit down."

He pointed to an old leather chair near the inglenook.

"You did me the honor to call upon my mother," I said, sitting myself down opposite to my host.

"*It was a pleasure and a duty, but I regret I did not find her at home.*"

"And she regrets it very much; but I am going to London to-night to bring her down to Sandwich."

"Indeed," he said; "I am very glad."

"And, meanwhile, I have something to say to you that will strangely interest you; and please you too, very much, I think."

"Good news?"

"Yes, very good news."

"Shadow and shine, sweets and bitters, such is the story of our life from day to day. I shall be glad of good news, for I have just received bad news."

"I am sorry to hear that."

"You remember," he said, again handing me his snuff-box, "you remember the history I gave you about the Newboldes?"

"Yes," I said, strangely interested myself.

"And of that very remarkable young fellow, George?"

"Yes," I said, my heart beating quickly.

"He is dead."

I did not reply, but waited to let the vicar continue.

He rose from his seat by the aid of a stick, and took from the mantel-shelf the very book in which I had read his name at Drummond's Gulch.

"I gave him that when he was a boy."

"Yes," I said, examining it, "and how has it come back to you?"

"An American gentleman called here not an hour ago, commissioned to deliver it back to me from the dying hands of George Newbolde; turn over the second leaf."

I did so, and observed in George's writing, but written with a hand that had trembled:

Good-by, my dear vicar—this will show that I remembered you and was grateful."

"A fine, noble fellow," said the vicar; "died at sea, bound for New Zealand."

I could not help thinking how carefully the plans of attack and retreat were being laid; I saw in this visitor my friend, Mr. Wilkess.

"Strange," I said.

"Not strange, but sad," the vicar replied; "death is not strange, life is."

"Yes," was all I could say.

"*The ways of Providence* are mysterious as they are wise. Poor

George, he suffered much, began life with a legacy of misery. It may have all been for the best. It is not for us poor mortals to say. He had fine qualities, rare qualities. I find great consolation in the fact that he remembered me. And I shall dearly treasure his death-bed message.

He fondled the book as it were, pressing it between his white bony hands.

"This was his favorite book, and I remember saying to him when we were reading together the fifth letter or chapter of it, touching the metamorphosis of worms, 'May you and I, George, when we die, feel as the Roman emperor felt, who, when he found his end approaching, cried out in allusion to the custom of decreeing an apotheosis to dead emperors, "I feel that I am becoming a god!"'"

The vicar turned to the page as he spoke.

"Here is the passage—see—marked in ink. And here, pages sixty-eight to seventy-one. 'What is happiness.' See, here are the lines upon which I preached floral sermons to him, poor fellow, the philosophy of which I laid to heart myself, for the teacher often learns more than the pupil he is instructing. 'Happiness is not a *blue* rose—it is the grass of the meadows, the bindweed of the fields, the wild rose of the hedges, a word, a song, a no matter what.'"

I felt almost impelled to break out with all I knew about the book, and to ask him to turn to other passages which had struck me as I turned over its leaves in the hut on that far away mountain in the West.

"But you have good news, you said."

"It will keep, vicar; my good news is in your estimation already very seriously discounted. And that book interests me very much."

"Yes, I felt sure it would. I can say to you about it what I could not say to the stranger who brought it. There is no relic of the past, poor George being dead, that I could possibly value more than this dear, thumbed old volume of the tender-hearted French philosopher. Poor George, he distressed himself more about a future he was never destined to see, than even concerning that past we all lamented. But here in this very chapter he was warned—and I know that he read these words more than once, and they are marked as you see. 'We worry, we torment ourselves for a future *which everything* tells us we shall never see.' And everything *speaks of death.* 'This house we live in was built for a man long

since dead, by masons who are long since dead.' And so on. But let us put the volume away, and its message from the dead—poor George!"

He opened a little cabinet by the fire, and laid the book reverently within an inner drawer.

My eyes followed him, and I felt sick at heart to think of the deception which had been practiced upon the vicar. Then I tried to place myself in George's place, and I knew that he must have written that death message with a keen pang, borne, however, with a heroic sense of duty and honor. Morally he was dead, and in his moral death he avenged his dead father and secured the unshadowed happiness of his sister. These were his motives; but the work of vengeance had yet to be accomplished. Nothing could more emphasize the certainty of his purpose than that book and its message. I was under the spell of it, and the vicar's words seemed like a benediction pronounced upon a sacrifice.

"And now, dear friend, for your news," said the vicar.

I was bewildered. His revelation had entirely upset the plan of my disclosure. I had managed in my own mind how to approach the chief object of my visit. I would have given the world, it seemed to me at that moment, if I could have released myself from my vow and confessed everything. But the bare suggestion of such a breach of honor and friendship sent the blood rushing into my face.

"I have distressed you," said the vicar; "forgive me."

"Your news is strangely though sadly *àpropos* of my own," I replied, now dashing right into the very heart of my subject; 'I have discovered Margaret Newbolde."

"Indeed," he said, "indeed, that is strange, Where?"

"In America."

"Well, well," he said, taking a more than usually large pinch of snuff.

"I met a young lady in London, fell in love with her, her birth was enveloped in mystery, she did not even know her proper name, nor who her parents were—she had no name."

"Indeed; well, well."

"I went to America to seek my fortune, came upon a man who knew of the story you told me when I first came here—"

"Yes, yes."

"He had met George Newbolde, who told him he was hunting down a scoundrel, and searching for his sister, and—"

"Yes. Well! Your news is strange, indeed."

"From circumstances he related to me, I came to the conclusion that the dear girl to whom I am engaged is Margaret Newbolde."

"You amaze me."

"It is true, and I want you to marry us,"

"I who married her father and mother?" he exclaimed; "I who told you of their joys and sorrows! You come to me with her love in your heart, you bring me news of her, and tell me not only that she lives, but that she is good and happy. I know she is good, for you are a good fellow, and would not be attracted by her else."

"I wish I were worthy of her," I said.

"Which convinces me you are. How mysterious are the ways of heaven, how strange to us, yet how profoundly wise. Our understandings can not trace out the varied maze—we are lost and bewildered. Addison has pointed in the fruitless search, 'Nor do we see with how much art the windings run, nor where the regular confusion ends'; mark the beautiful suggestiveness of the idea conveyed in the paradoxical phrase, 'regular confusion.'"

It was a relief to me that the old man's thoughts became reflective rather than inquisitive.

"Poor George!" he said, presently, "thou art gone, and in the midst of my grief I find thy sister. Ah! well, my dear young friend, it is a short journey this life, a brief march to another and a better world; the time is so short we should do nothing in it to regret; and yet it is long enough to make one's peace with heaven."

"I am going to London for the license and for my mother, and when I return I will, with your permission, bring Margaret and my mother to see you."

"They will be heartily welcome, and I bless the day I first met you looking at the old Manse—do you remember?"

"I shall never forget it."

"You will stay and take luncheon, Mr. Maynard?" said the vicar, his old servant announcing that it was ready.

"Thank you, no," I said; "I must go to town by the next train; I will hope to see you again to-morrow."

"Then good-by for the present," he said, shaking my hand; "*you leave me* plenty of food for reflection—and for thankfulness *to God. It comforts* me to feel that George died in the faith and

did not forget his old pastor; and it rejoices me to know that Maggie lives and has such good prospects—bitters and sweets, Mr. Maynard—sunshine and shadow—and such is life!"

CHAPTER IX.

"FOUL DEEDS WILL RISE, THOUGH ALL THE EARTH O'ERWHELM THEM TO MEN'S EYES."

I WENT to London in a bewildered condition of mind, happy and sad, full of delight, and afflicted with fear.

I do not think I am mentally very strong. Indeed, I think my character may be called weak. I am one of those men who lack decision. My mind is a kind of shuttlecock which the bats of strong men can play with. Yet I flatter myself I conducted my encounter with the Wolf cleverly, with firmness and with courage. But when I think of it, I confess to myself I was only strong in a reflected sort of way; I was imitating George Newbolde; I felt as if I was standing in his shoes as well as my own. Once or twice during the interview I spoke and acted as if I thought he overheard me.

When I arrived in London Wilkess stepped out of the train.

If I were not certain who had called upon the vicar a few hours previously, I knew now; and inspired with the moral and religious tone the vicar took about the double message of death and life, of bitter and sweet, of sun and shadow, I resolved to make one last effort to save Sandwich and the vicar from a new scandal, perhaps a tragedy, and George Newbolde from a crime, perhaps a murder.

"Shall we drive together?" I asked, as Wilkess hailed a hansom.

"Why, is that you!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it is I."

"Where do you hail from?"

"From Sandwich; and you?"

"Guess I've been in that same locality," he said, offering me a cigar. "Won't you come into the bar-room here and have a drink? Hi, porter, bring these bags."

A porter carried our luggage into the refreshment room.

"You Britishers certainly do lay over us in the matter of railway depots and traveling accommodation. And I begin to think you are ahead of us in the way of a constitution. A democracy is all very well for poor devils, but an aristocracy's the thing for a feller when he's made his pile. To think that you can't all through the United States call out, 'Hi, porter, bring these bags!' with the smallest chance of success, is a humiliating thing for a feller with a gold mine to his credit. Why, it's done me no end of good to tip the guard. If you tried that game on with a Yankee guard he'd be likely to let daylight into you, eh?"

"Depends how you approached him," I said.

"Approached him!" Wilkess exclaimed; "why, you can't approach him at all. An American guard just walks clean over you. Don't he come and sit down by your side and enter into conversation with you and patronize you, by thunder, as if you were no more'n dirt? You know he does. I'm just tickled to death with your railway arrangements. I tipped your guard, and had a *coupé* all to myself for half a dollar. What will you take, soda and brandy?"

"Thank you."

"Split S and B, if you please, Miss," said Wilkess, taking off his hat to the barmaid, and then turning smilingly to me with a further commentary upon English institutions.

"S and B is the nearest approach to a cocktail, bright and warm; handy and suits the climate; and your bar-room with angelic attendants, real ladies; if ever I get back to Tombstone I'll astonish that one horse city, you bet! And we thought we had a depot at Tombstone; Chicago thinks she has; and New York jest busts with pride over her Central Depot. I smile when I think this Victoria Station heads the whole lot; and I smile the more when I think you've got a dozen others as fine, with book-stores, and bar-rooms and hotels, and porters to carry your trunks, and guards waiting to be tipped and showing you into private carriages, and touching their caps as if you were the President. It suits me down to the ground. Well, here we go!"

I responded to the familiar formula, clinked my glass with his, and we sat down at a small round table in a corner of the room.

"I am glad you don't despise the old country; there are Americans who say we are played out."

"*There are some* Americans ain't worthy to be lampposts in

England," said Wilkess; "a feller who can't, out of his all-fired pride of country, see the good on this side the Atlantic ain't fit to be a citizen of our great and glorious Republic."

Wilkess rattled on in this way, and I failed to change the current of his talk. He reminded me of a lark which, being disturbed on her nest, pretends that it is in another part of the meadow from that whence she rose in a nervous flutter at your close proximity to it, or that she has no nest at all. He was evidently talking me away from the subject I was bent upon discussing.

"And Sandwich, you like that queer old place, eh?"

"It's just lovely," he replied, "and bears out all you told me on the ship concerning your antiquities. Just lovely! Been retiring into the country away from the sea for eight hundred years they say, or the sea has been turning its back on it for some other place —tired of coming into the river, and finding no business going on, I guess. I wouldn't want any better example of the old country than Sandwich, Eight hundred years to make up its mind to retire from the wholesale trade. And when time's up doesn't break up, but remains a solid city with a church that will be solid when Gabriel blows his trumpet. There's only one England, you bet, and I guess she was ordained for the mother of nations; we Americans would never have had the patience to be the mother of anything better nor a dry-goods store; but nations like men have their missions, and America's filling hers, you bet, in a way that's a credit to the old 'un, and don't you ever believe as she's going to do anything ag'in the old folks at home, no, sir! If you Britishers ever get into a tight place with your neighbors, you would find that America would not play the part of the unnatural child. I don't say that there are Yanks who wouldn't like to see you in a hole, but only for the sake of being allowed to help you out."

The rate at which Wilkess talked kept me more or less silent; but I was determined to bring him to book sooner or later. Presently our polite porter called us a hansom, handed in our bags, received a liberal douceur from Wilkess, and we drove to the banker's hotel in Covent Garden.

"I think I will go in," I said.

"That's good," he replied, "your mother won't be expecting you? I'll drive with you to Doughty Street if you like."

"No, thank you."

We went into his room.

"I want to talk to you," I said, "seriously."

"Thought so," he answered; "you are a Britisher right through to your boots. You have been wanting to ever since we met at the depot, and I gave you every opportunity, and yet you wait until we've drunk, jawed, drove a mile or two, and just as we should be saying see you again at dinner or somewhere, later, you think it's time to break out. Well, Mister Hickory, go ahead; what is it? Better late than never."

"Will you answer my questions frankly and fully?"

"I will.

"You have been to Sandwich not alone on my account nor Maggie's but on his?"

"Whose?"

"Our friend, my partner?"

"That's so."

"Has he told you all?"

"Guess he has."

"Don't let me beat about the bush. What we say to each other is sacred. I will give you my full confidence; you may give me yours. He has told you of his boyhood, his father, his mother, why he left Sandwich, of his vow, and his self-elected mission, has he?"

"Yes, the whole business; nothing left out, I think; right up to date."

"Then you can now understand what I feel, what I have said?"

"Well, I guess not."

"Don't you desire to see our friend happy and free; to see brother and sister restored to each other?"

"Yes, I believe you and me could shake on that."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Then why not let us join our forces and bring it to pass?"

"Because it's not our affair."

"Not our affair?"

"No, *sir*. It is his affair. He is the boss. He commands don't he? You don't, anyhow. You have made your bargain, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"George Newbolde is dead; Dick Drummond revealed the dead *to you; with* that revelation comes the realization of all your hopes *in life—money,* independence, and the girl you love."

"Well," I said.

"Is that so?"

"It is."

"On the other side *he* gets his turn served, he has *his* hopes and plans—what?"

"Yes. So had Mephistopheles in the play," I said, for want of a better illustration.

"Well, and so had Faust, and a real good time, and if I'd been in his shoes I'd have taken the chances. But, Hickory Maynard, ain't you a-stretching the comparison? I've seen that play; but there was no man in it as was worthy to be named alongside Dick Drummond except the brother, and he was killed by a foul blow that Mephisto gave him; but this brother in our play ain't going for any other than the devil himself, and don't you forget it."

"There is no man in the world I love and honor so much as George Newbolde," I said.

"The late George Newbolde," said Wilkess. "Now look here, my boy, you let George be, and just forget Dick—he's only a new acquaintance—let him run his show in his own way. He's exposed his hand to me solemn and straight, and says he, 'Manny, my old friend, would you play it?' and I said, 'Dick, old pal, yes, for every cent it's worth.' And says he, 'Do you consider my partner in the Gulch has anything to say in this?' and I says, 'No.' And that's how it is. When I look back and think of my mother, and my dear old father, who died with his hand in mine, and try and think what I would have done if I'd seen him drawed out of the river with the mark of Cain on him—curse me, if I can bring myself to think of it!"

"It was a foul deed, prefaced by a worse one still, I think, and the vicar himself believed and still believes Lucas guilty."

"Anyhow, we know he lured old man Newbolde to drink that he might carry off his wife, ain't that to you and me what your English law calls a capital offense? Then to kill the husband and enter into the inheritance of his property, steal his child, and great heavens above us, how do you know the woman herself died a natural death?"

"It is indeed most horrible," I said.

"And would you like to tell the story to that sweet girl of yours?"

"God forbid!"

"She is in happy ignorance of it?"

"She is."

"Have you calculated that if you stood in the way of George, you just have to give it all away?"

"Yes."

"And are you equal to it? Why, it would be calculated to break up that sweet young lady; don't walk any further in that direction. There is an old proverb, what can't be cured must be endured; and another as says, don't waken a sleeping lion. You just go your way—it is straight and sunshiny and strewn with flowers, like the first break of summer on a virgin prairie. You are fond of books; did you ever read our 'Professor of the Breakfast Table?' I know you have. Just you try and remember what he says about truth being tough, don't break like a bubble; you can run over it with a locomotive, and it will get well while error dies of lock-jaw if it scratches its finger."

I don't think I had paid much attention to these last remarks. It seemed to me as if Wilkess was talking against time.

And so he was, though he talked to good purpose; for the more he showed me the rosy path of dalliance and love, the less my scruples in regard to George Newbolde's pilgrimage of vengeance became, and I began to find excuses for myself, and for him, and to sympathize with the hero of Drummond's Gulch.

Moreover, as the hours flew by, hurrying on to the happy moment which should make Maggie mine forever, I began to feel a selfish joy in life—a rapture of existence—a blissful sense of motion. It was as if I dreamed a dream that was reality; but too delightful to be true. And I looked forward to the coming hours as the beginning of a new and even more ecstatic time. A radiant bark was waiting to set sail upon a sunny river, with two passengers. And one of them had soft gray eyes, in whose depths I saw the reflection of my happiness.

Manwaring G. Wilkess was a diplomat. He drew my thoughts out of the shadow into the sunshine.

We were all busy the next day, and the next; and fate seemed busy too; for we had unconsciously fixed the day of our marriage on the anniversary of the murder of the unhappy painter of Sandwich.

CHAPTER X.

MANWARING G. WILKESS AT WORK.

MARGARET would not hear of any change in her engagement at the theatre. I suggested that her part should be taken by some other lady. Or that the short season should close at once, and we should pay any pecuniary damage the local impressario might consider that he had thereby sustained.

"No," she said, "let me finish my work; the stage has been good to me, the public has been kind; but for the theatre you would not have found me in comfortable circumstances; I would like to feel that I have done my duty in this matter and not been ungrateful."

The last night was on Friday the 31st of October; the wedding was fixed for the next day, Saturday, the 1st of November. It was to be perfectly quiet. Nobody was to know of it, except the minister, the clerk, and the sexton. My mother was to be present. We were to drive quietly from the church to Vicar Oliphant's house, take luncheon, and then start right away for the continent.

Two days before the marriage, Mr. Manwaring G. Wilkess had an interview with Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby at his rooms.

The Westerner had introduced himself as having arrived from Australia on important business, the nature of which we shall understand from the following dialogue:

"Dead!" repeated Willoughby.

"Yes, sir."

"Long ago?"

"About five years."

"Poor fellow; and possessed of large means, you say?"

"The owner of an estate near Melbourne, and a large tract of territory in New Zealand."

"A clever young man; did he ever speak to you—ah—about me, and of an unfortunate affair? No doubt he did."

"He often mentioned you to me, and you should have reason to rejoice in his death, I guess."

"On account of the provision he makes—ah—for my stepdaughter?"

"Not that so much as the provision he would have made for you had he lived."

"In what way, may I ask?"

"He would have killed you."

"Really; did his animosity live so long? extraordinary. Of course, the poor fellow would naturally feel bitterly—ah—toward me, because he was too young to understand the situation."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, indeed; he was only, I suppose, about ten; you have—ah—no doubt heard the painful story from him?"

"Well, yes."

"With the bias of an enemy to me—I do not complain of that. A boy whose mother leaves him, whose father—ah—is drowned, and who by some fatal perversity mixes me up with his misfortunes—ah—as their cause, may be forgiven for a rancorous feeling toward me."

"It was rough on him, that's a fact," said Wilkess, chewing the end of his cigar. "You took his mother away, is that so?"

"His father, Ned Newbolde, was a worthless fellow—ah—a drunkard, and not in any sense a good husband—ah—untrue to his wife, a dissipated, idle man; he dragged her into the gutter."

"As bad as that?" said Wilkess.

"Worse, my dear sir, worse. I had known the poor girl whom he induced to accept his hand—a dirty hand, very—had known her a young lady of refinement, of elegance; I found her a broken-hearted woman—a drudge, a slave—why, sir, he beat her!"

"Did he? Had you known him before his marriage?"

"Slightly."

"You were not his chum?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't go around with him—two bosom friends?"

"Never; the poor unhappy man was not a fit companion for a gentleman—ah."

"But his wife was," said Wilkess, who struggled hard to prevent himself from dropping into sarcasm.

Lucas looked quickly into the banker's face, but only saw there a calm expression of innocent inquiry,

"His wife, sir, was a lady; in her distress she appealed to an *old friend*, and after consulting with my solicitors, and sustaining *for a long time*—ah—the siege of her complaints and her wail of

woe, if I may so speak—ah—I gave her the asylum of my home; I may have been to blame when my action is regarded from a strict moral standpoint; but I am not an angel, sir, I only claim to be a man, with a man's heart in my breast."

He got up and walked to the other end of the room, as if to conceal his emotion.

"Poor Mary, she was born to be an ornament to society, and she lived to die under a cloud."

"Under a cloud," said Wilkess, "how's that?"

"Society turned its back upon her, though I married her immediately she became a widow; society is a fickle thing, sir, in England."

"Where is the lady now, sir?"

"In heaven," said Lucas, raising a white silk handkerchief to his eyes, "in heaven."

"Dead, then?"

"Died at Lucerne, in the arms of her dear child Maggie, my sweet, angelic step-daughter, who is to be married as Margaret Newbolde—which, pardon me—ah—for thinking, is a mistake."

"Why?"

"Raises up a blemished name—revives sad memories; she has been gently nurtured and educated—ah, the only trouble in our lives has been her desire to go upon the stage; but I would not stand in the way of her lightest wish."

"You are a real good man," said Wilkess; "it is a pleasure to listen to you; the poor boy who died in the mining country must have been strangely warped against you."

"He was, he was," said Lucas, "though I offered to charge myself with his education, and would have taken care of him and given him a fortune."

"And yet," went on Wilkess, "he regarded you as his bitterest foe; why, by thunder, I have heard him say you murdered his father."

"The poor boy said so at the inquest on the body," replied Lucas, "and I had to take proceedings against a woman here, who repeated the libel. Of course—ah—I put that down at once, though I forgave the poor boy, forgave him!"

"He did not forgive you," said Wilkess, "on the contrary, he just haunted you right through all creation to kill you."

Lucas fidgeted in his seat.

"You astonish me!"

"And if he had ever come upon you, he'd just have shot you at sight, sure!"

"Really?"

"Why, he tracked you in London, Paris, Vienna, San Francisco, and nearly caught on to you twice."

"Really, did he?" said Lucas; "did he wish to murder me, then?"

"Well, no, he wished to kill you; but he'd have treated you to some chin music, as we say in America, first, and then—"

Wilkess paused, and looked Lucas in the face.

"Shot me?" he said; "but two can—ah—play at that game, Mr. Wilkess."

"Yes, that's a fact."

"One does not spend half one's life on the continent of Europe—ah—and visit San Francisco without having our little affairs. I have had mine, believe me; but it would—ah—have grieved me to meet my dear step-daughter's brother."

"Of course, it would," said Wilkess; "but, as you say, one has one's affairs—shootings we call them; did you kill your man?"

"I will not boast, sir," said Lucas; "but I am a gentleman; my ancestors came to England with William the Norman."

"In what line," asked Wilkess, "dry goods?"

"Chivalry, sir; conquest, sir," said Lucas.

"You've got a coat of arms and things, then," said Wilkess; "must be a grand thing that; we in America are content to have our own personal record clear and straight, without taking into account our ancestors; but that's our ignorance."

"Not at all."

"Then I guess it's the climate," said Wilkess, with the faint suggestion of a chuckle at his successful manipulation of his interview with the Wolf.

"It may be so," said Lucas.

"Well, then, let us just see how we stand; you consent to the vicar acting as father, and giving away the bride?"

"I consent in deference to the last wishes of her dead brother."

"That is all right. And you will relinquish all claims upon the *old Manse* in consideration of two thousand pounds?"

"*Yes.*"

"The other little details of the dead man's wishes can be arranged later."

"Quite so."

"I would like you to go over the Manse with me. The idea is to tear it down and build a monument there to the father; but I guess I will claim a margin on that; seems a pity to tear down what you call a historic place; it is very ancient, eh?"

"Yes—ah—very."

"You know it well?"

"Well, I did years ago."

"You will show it to me, eh? Like to hear you English fellers with pedigrees discourse on old houses."

CHAPTER XI.

COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.

A MILE below Sandwich a steam launch was moored in the river. Two men sat in the little cabin. They were George Newbolde and Manwaring G. Wilkess.

The rising tide lapped the muddy banks of the tidal stream, and made a low, murmuring music at the bow of the little craft.

"Is is the thirty-first of October," said George, sitting by the cabin stove, and contemplating Wilkess, who, with his body in a low arm-chair, and his feet upon the back of another, at an angle of forty degrees, was smoking a huge cigar.

"The thirty-first it is. I know you are particular about the date."

"And I died five years ago?"

"Five years this very month," said Wilkess.

"At sea?"

"At sea," said the American.

"The vicar was sorry?"

"He melted right away."

"Poor old fellow!"

"*You broke it to him* cautiously?"

"I did not jump it on him, Dick, like an Injun out of ambush."

"No, that's right. What did he say?"

"'The Lord's will be done.' And I thought it would be kerrect to say Amen!"

"Yes?"

"And I said Amen."

"And then?"

"I gave him the book."

"Yes, that would please him."

"Well, not exactly; he began to cry over it, poor old boss, and I was sorry for him. Seemed kinder hard on the old man, when I knew you were shadowing me perhaps the other side the street."

"Poor old vicar!"

"I don't know that I ever was in a set-up job much harder to carry out than this. Seemed as if old man vicar couldn't speak for some time; then he fell to fingering the book and turning the leaves over. And he said to me, 'Not that I can read, friend, for the tears that have come into my eyes—an old man's weakness—and I loved this young fellow as if he were my own son.'"

"Poor, dear old vicar," said George, thrusting his hands deep into his trouser pockets; "poor old chap!"

"I read the last words to him myself, and then he took hold of my hand and trembled, and said, 'Thank God,' and I led him to a chair."

"You are a kind-hearted old chum, Manny," said George.

"Guess I'm not a brute, Dick; it would have cut any man to see the white-haired old parson with the tears in his eyes, and he said, 'I have not long to stay in this world, friend, but I am glad, since it was to be, that I have lived to receive this token of my dear George's love and remembrance of me. He did not live to fulfill what he chose to regard as his mission, I suspect; but whether he did or not, he would always have had my love, and, if he needed it, my forgiveness.'"

"He said that, did he?" exclaimed George.

"I believe I have repeated his exact words," said the American; "because I thought you would like to have him say just such words as those."

"Thank you, old chap," said George. "You are right. They *strengthen me.* I would not have wished him to say anything better. *I am only* sorry that it was necessary I should be dead for him

to have said as much. But he will have been cheered ere this with Maynard's news, eh?"

"Yes, I guess Mister Hickory would be surprised to hear of your death."

"But he is not likely to have cast any doubt upon your information?"

"No, he has stopped struggling."

"He did struggle, then?"

"Yes, hard; his heart is right, but his head's feathery."

"You like him, don't you?"

"First-rate; like him none the less for squealing, like him all the more for doing his level best to keep you straight, as he thought. What worried him most was not having you at the wedding, not having you and Maggie come together again."

"Yes, yes," said George, speaking a little impatiently; "an affectionate chap, but feather-headed; you are quite right, Manny, old chap."

"Suppose it is impossible, boss," said the American, looking through his parted feet at George, and chewing the end of his cigar in a corner of his mouth as he spoke. "Suppose it ain't possible to put that in the contract, eh? She's just as sweet as they make 'em, that sister of yours; so's Mrs. Maynard. Guess we could have an all-fired good time with that wedding party."

"And what about Lucas?" said George, ignoring the pacific suggestions of his friend.

"Don't want to say any more about the wedding?"

"No."

"Nor about the little sister?"

"Her brother is dead and buried, old chum."

"Can't resurrect him?"

"No, once for all, Wilkess, no. Now, tell me about Lucas. He is glad I'm dead, eh?"

"Yes; he kinder cheered up at the news, and I encouraged the skunk to be joyful. Told him you'd been on his trail for years, and that you would just have shot him at sight if ever you had seen him."

"Did he wince at that?"

"Considerable; but recovered himself, and said, 'Two could play at shooting.'"

"He did; and will be game, do you think?"

"When he can't help it. Yes."

"That's good; all goes as we could wish."

"That's so."

"Even Maynard, as you say, is reconciling himself to the inevitable?"

"Yes; he's bracing himself up to it."

"And the young lady?"

"The gal he's going to marry?"

"Yes; does she look happy?"

"As a bee in a flower."

"She knows I'm dead?"

"Never knew you was alive, thanks to that skunk, Lucas. You was a weakly boy, according to his account, and died young."

"So; well, I am glad of that. It spares her something; but the vicar, won't he tell her the truth?"

"Some day, perhaps. I advised Hickory to ask him to say nothing about it now."

"Kind, thoughtful old chap you are."

"Did Lucas ask how you had discovered him?"

"Yes; and I told him through Maynard meeting me and telling me about Margaret and the story the vicar had related to him. Oh, I fixed it all square by putting myself more or less in your place."

"And the old house belongs to him, does it?'

"He holds it under a mortgage, and it does not rent because he will do no repairs."

"Naboth being dead," said George, "Ahab took possession of the vineyard; but Elijah said to him, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

"I guess you must be practising for the pulpit, Dick, or going to take a 'hall.'"

"And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee!" continued the hero of Drummond's Gulch. "Vengeance was hot and quick in those days."

"That's so; Judge Lynch was supreme when Solomon reigned over Israel."

"And you think he'll fight?" said George.

"*Like a rat in a pit.*"

"*He will require* pressure?"

"Not more than the pressure you mean to give him; I would not give him the show you are arranging."

I am not a murderer, Manny, old chap; I am an avenger."

"It's a new idea of vigilanting, to give the cuss who's condemned a chance to shoot the leader. But you are bossing this thing, and I'll see it through."

George put out his hand. The other man shook it.

"I will get into the Manse at four o'clock. The cellar is roomy. I have blocked the grating. There are three sconces on the wall that were there when my father lived. Candles will give us light enough. I brought a case of duelling pistols from New York. I will take a flask of brandy in my pocket. You think you can bring another witness, or second?"

"Yes, I know him. The poor devil you want to pension for life."

"The railway porter?"

"That's the feller."

"I fear he will be a partisan."

"If you want it to be such a darned secret meeting, you must lay your plans accordingly."

"He will do."

"And I will see to his pension?"

"If I fall," said George, "the affair will be made public; bury me with my father. You will be arrested, perhaps imprisoned—"

"I'll see it through," said Wilkess, calmly.

"Then the whole story will come out; we must consider all the possibilities—"

"I'll see it through," repeated Wilkess.

"Let it come out, since it must, and—"

"I'll see it through," repeated Wilkess.

"If he falls?" said George.

"He will," said Wilkess.

"In that case, the witness, pledged to secrecy, paid for secrecy, will leave us and go his way; he will be still for his own sake; we will deal with the body as he dealt with my father's; the bridge stands where it did, the river flows on as of yore. And what of the launch?"

"This: we will get aboard and run her out. The schooner lies two miles off the coast. I have arranged the signals. The launch may be suspected. She may be chased. They will look for her in

some local port, lie around for her on the coast. When we are aboard the schooner we will scuttle her."

"Good, Manny; you are a great man."

"One don't fight Injuns, boss the frontier, run a bank in a mining camp, and not learn how to cover a retreat; though for my part I guess I should face the music right through."

"How?"

"Stand there and say I done it. There ain't no law in any civilized land that would touch you for it."

"I want to save my sister from the scandal and excitement of a trial. They would try me for murder. I am dead to her; let me be dead; if Fate or Providence decree otherwise, so be it; but I have seen the business in this way ever since I touched these shores again, and it is right. If it comes out, my sister can only think of me as one who fought a duel to avenge her father's honor and death—that is all, whether he falls or I fall."

"He will fall," said Wilkess.

"This will satisfy Maynard's scruples also; but for these considerations, I would have killed him like a dog, beat him to death, strangled him in the river—"

George's face worked convulsively for a moment, then became rigid once more.

"You are a bit of a crank, that's a fact," said Wilkess.

"Mad with method, old pal," said George. "Do you know, my dear friend, the only true friend I have in the world, do you know, Wilkess, that I feel at this moment as if my father were only just dead. Time, they say, softens grief, tones down asperities, takes off the edge of the keenest calamity—"

"And don't it?"

"No."

"Why, partner, if the grief I felt when my father died had lasted, I'd have passed in my checks in four-and-twenty hours."

"We are not all alike."

"That's so."

"Do you not sometimes look back and think it was only yesterday when your father died?"

"When I'm a peg too low, I have, and seen the dear old boy, and heard his voice—that's a fact, God rest his soul!"

"*And I,* at this moment, feel that yesterday they came and told *me my father* was drowned; and I see, as if it was yesterday, his

poor wounded body, all wet, and his dear hair all tangled; and I feel as if yesterday I vowed to avenge him—ah, dear friend, he was so good, so clever, so fond of me! I had seen him already broken-hearted, coming home from London full of hope and joy and success, bringing his good news to her; and she had gone!—gone, gone with that fiend, Lucas, who had professed to be his friend—"

"The infernal scoundrel!" exclaimed Wilkess, parenthetically.

"His friend; under that guise he tempted him to drink, lowered him in the estimation of my mother, a weak, pretty, irresponsible woman; under that cloak he stole her away; and that he might take full possession, and have the vineyard also, he murdered his broken-hearted victim. For years I have lived in the hope that underlies the words, 'The day will come'; and now the day is here; it is here, and it seems but yesterday, so good is Fate, it seems but yesterday that I begun to live up to my mission. All that lies between is a dream, with one reality in it, one reality, and that is you, old friend, you!"

He rose, laid his hand on the other's shoulder, as he continued—

"Fortune, they say, 'provides many compensations' for the calamities of Fate. You are my compensation. If I had not encountered all this trouble I would not have known you. After to-morrow I will be happy a man, not happy in the sense of a demonstrative joyfulness, but happy and content, with an unclouded future. And if, as it is said, we meet again after this life, I can meet my father with an unclouded brow. You have read Hamlet?"

"I guess I have, and seen it played in New York."

"Sometimes I think I may end like the prince who avenged his father, prompted thereto by heaven and by hell; if I do, I bid you, dear friend, to report me aright, and keep my memory green."

"I will see you through it, Dick, but not like that, old pard, not like that."

CHAPTER XII.

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

ALTHOUGH the events of this chapter are to me the most important in my life, the *dénouement* of my dearest hopes, I feel in recording them that at this juncture they are no better than circumstances which in a play might be referred to and not enacted.

The dramatist might fill the stage with a wedding procession. The novelist might crowd his pages with bridal dresses and organ peals. I am so anxious now to get to the end of this history, feeling how big with Fate are these closing records, that I can only realize the history of this wedding-day as a dream full of joy and fear—a dream with sweet music in it that might at any moment change to strange cries and alarm bells.

I think the season lent a certain mystery to the time; my soul was like a dead autumn landscape with the sun upon it. I was very happy and very sad. Maggie looked at me wistfully. But I was all sunshine to her. I think I tried to forget the autumn shadows that seemed to lay across the happy day.

There is real pathos in the closing days of the English fall.

The American climate lends a radiance to autumn which is foreign to England.

November inaugurates a season of darkness and storm. Nature at this period is in sympathy with all that is pathetic in human lives, and supplies Tragedy with a characteristic background.

Do you not remember when the painter of Sandwich was taken out of the river fifteen years ago?

Our mind is full of that event to-day. It is once more the anniversary of George Newbolde's bitterest memory, and of his vow of vengeance. While I stood at the altar I felt a sense of shame and guilt. It occurred to me that I had bought my happiness with a crime. And then when I kneeled down and she was my wife, I felt that if it were so I would do it again rather than lose the bliss of this moment.

And the dear old vicar, at our little breakfast party, spoke of the happiness in store for us with such an air of authority that I *comforted myself* with the thought that after all the hand of Providence was in this thing, that God was with us, and that the vicar

was His messenger. Anyhow, it seemed to me then, as it does now, that I was hurried on helplessly, as if Fate had taken me by the shoulder and pushed me on my way, as if Fortune had strewed my path with flowers, and that I should have been untrue to my love if I had insisted upon looking for the thorns. If I had been made of that sterner metal of which George Newbolde was made, I might have turned and defied Fate, might have battled with my good fortune, resisted it, and lost this blissful day, and many another to follow. We are what God has made us. And I am married to that girl who suffered in the play years ago; and, thank God, we have no longer any part in the tragedy scenes of this drama of real life. We move on to pleasant music. There is no danger in our way.

The last good wishes, and old slippers for luck, have been flung after the bridal pair. The vicar has blessed us. We have started, "I and mine," on our wedding tour. An autumn fog has come up the river, and the world is hushed. As we step into the cars, we hear the bells ringing through the mist. Nobody is to know why they ring except us. Hickory made that a condition with the dear old vicar, who insisted that he could not let us depart without the traditional peal.

And so we go away with his fatherly words in our hearts, and the clash of joy bells in our ears. We are surely the happiest people in the train.

A shadow falls across my thoughts now and then; but the sunshine of the time is too much for it. I can think of nothing but my happiness.

Maggie has insisted that my mother shall accompany us on our travels. We go first to Dover, and thence to Paris, on a long tour. For I am keeping that grim agreement with George.

I did not know until some years afterward the exact details of the fulfillment of George's view of the motto, "The day will come." They leaked out by degrees from the western banker, from George himself, and in newspaper paragraphs.

The last sad smile of autumn appears to have illuminated our path from the church to the vicarage; even then the sun was half hidden in mist, and the dead leaves were lying in the road. Two hours later Sandwich was in possession, as I have said, of an autumn fog—a gray mist that seemed to be coming up the river in battalions.

Soon afterwards, as I have been since informed, darkness fell

upon the ancient city. The old bridge disappeared, the church, the streets, the Manse, were blotted out. You could hear the bells ringing, and it must have sounded like mockery to those who heard them. Happily we were running out of the fog into open country, and we knew only of our own happiness. "What the eye does not see the heart does not grieve for."

While the pleasant comedy of our wedding was being enacted, Chingford Lucas was face to face with the dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TRAPPED WOLF.

BETWEEN the last soft smile of the autumn and the beginning of what may be called the cold frown of this first day of the winter months, Mr. Wilkess and Mr. Fitzherbert Willoughby had entered the precincts of the old Manse. The Wolf had obtained the keys from the local agent. Not that they were necessary, for George himself had found his way there, and had prepared a reception-room for his mortal enemy.

"A deserted old place," remarked Wilkess; "but you Britishers like this, eh?—what you call ancient and picturesque."

"Yes," said the Wolf.

"But here's a corner all trim and sweet," Wilkess said, "and a rose in bloom—the last, I should say."

"Yes," said the Wolf.

"A good thing, perhaps, after all, to tear the old building down," said Wilkess; "put up a column in memory of the painter, with seats round it, and a garden for the children and the old folks to sit in, eh?"

"Yes," said the Wolf.

"You seem kinder miserable," remarked Wilkess; "thinking of old days, perhaps?"

"Yes," said the Wolf.

"Well, then, let us get through—the sooner the better, eh?"

"Yes."

"*We will go* into the house then."

They went in.

"What was this room?" asked Wilkess.

"The studio," said the other.

"Fine room."

"Yes," said the Wolf.

"It's getting dark, a passing cloud," said Wilkess, leading the way toward the cellar. "What sort of a basement is it?"

"Very good," said the Wolf.

"I've heard there's grand wine cellars in these old houses."

"Yes," said the Wolf.

As they turned to the left at a landing before reaching the bottom of the stairs, a light could be seen in a small room, which was called the cellarman's pantry.

"What's that?" asked the Wolf, in a startled manner.

"A candle, perhaps," said the other, stepping deftly to the rear; "couldn't be robbers, eh?"

The Wolf did not reply.

"Have you your pistols?"

"No," said the Wolf.

"I have," said Wilkess, producing a six-shooter; "go a-head, I'll take care of you."

They entered the room together.

It was a small apartment, and very solid, as if it had been excavated out of a rock, and made for a prison cell. Probably that was its history, for in the old days the houses of great people in England were mostly provided with such places of detention.

As Wilkess entered, he swung the door behind him, and it was bolted from without.

The Wolf turned suddenly.

"What's that?"

"We are locked in and guarded," said Wilkess.

"By whom?"

"A friend of mine, an enemy of yours," said Wilkess.

The Wolf staggered toward a bench that was fastened to the wall.

"Is this a trap?"

"It is," said Wilkess; "but I will not ask you to stay here long."

"Fool, fool!" exclaimed the Wolf; "why did I believe your lies? I doubted you at first—George Newbolde is not dead! You *have brought me here* to murder me. Help! help!"

He was beside himself with rage and terror.

"It ain't no good screaming," said Wilkess.

"Why did I come here unarmed!" went on the prisoner; "why did I trust this liar!"

Wilkess turned, with the intention of signalling the guard to open the door, when, as quick as thought, the Wolf whipped out a pistol from his breast-pocket and fired, but, in doing so, knocked down the candle that was stuck into a sconce in the wall. In the darkness, Wilkess, who was unhurt, dropped upon the floor in a crouching attitude, the door opened, and a beam of light from a dark lantern falling full upon the Wolf at that moment, Wilkess tripped up his man and disarmed him.

"Oh, you yelping coyote," he exclaimed, as the other struggled in his iron grip, "that's how you fight, is it?"

Wresting the pistol from him, he said, "Now put up your hands, while I go through you, or I'll make a grease-spot of you."

The hands went up. Wilkess turned out the prisoner's pockets, and being satisfied that he had no other weapon about him, said, "Get up."

He did so, and, conscious of the presence of another person, shrank back into the furthermost corner of the cell.

"Do your plans for the duel still hold?" asked Wilkess of the man with the dark lantern.

"Yes."

"After his attempt on my life?"

"Just the same."

"Very well; then listen, you murdering ruffian, while I deliver judgment. You have been found guilty of various crimes against George Newbolde and his peace, more particularly of the cold-blooded assassination of his father fifteen years ago this very day; and if I had full power over your sentence I would hang you to a lamp-post, or shoot you where you stand, in your boots, and chuck you into the river to rot. But Newbolde is a bit of a crank concerning this thing, and he challenges you to a duel—"

"He is alive, then?" gasped the prisoner.

"He stands beside you," said Wilkess.

"Great heavens!" hissed the Wolf; "I'm lost!"

"Not yet," said Wilkess; "he gives you a fair show: a duel to *the death; will* you fight?"

"*On equal* terms?" gasped the Wolf.

"Yes."

"With witnesses?"

"Yes; as fair and straight as if you were a gentleman, instead of a thief, a beast, and an assassin."

"If I refuse?"

"Death all the same."

"Trapped, trapped!" shrieked the Wolf.

"Well, yes, more or less; but do you accept the terms of release? Answer quick."

"I do."

"You will have two hours to compose your mind, make your will, confess your crimes, and otherwise amuse yourself; there's a table in the corner there, and in it a drawer with writing goods, and here's a flask of brandy. No, I guess it ain't poison, I'll drink first. See!"

It was a glass flask. Wilkess drank. The Wolf watched him.

"Can I see a priest?" asked the prisoner.

"A what?"

"A priest."

"No, sir. But confession's good for the soul, even if you make it without a priest. You might write it out and put it in your pocket, so that if you are killed it will be a sort of life premium on your soul; and like Paddy in the song, if you live you can act otherwise."

Thereupon Wilkess relighted the candle, the silent guard with the lantern opened the door, and the murderer was left alone to count the beads of his pernicious sins.

And the bells were ringing merrily.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OTHER WITNESS; AND WHAT THE MOON SAW.

"A GOOD thing I found your cottage before the fog came on so thickly as it has within the last five minutes," said Manwaring G. Wilkess, of Tombstone City, United States of America, to our old acquaintance, the Sandwich railway porter.

"It is main thick," said the porter; "never see it thicker."

"But you could find your way in it?"

"Yes; find my way about Sandwich blindfolded," he said.

"That's a good thing," said the American.

"Be it? Well, I'm glad anything's good these times. What's them bells a-ringing for?"

"There's been a wedding in the church, I hear."

"Indeed; well, I don't wish 'em any harm," said the porter.

"No; I guess you will wish them long life, and that they may live long and prosper, like Rip in the play, when you know who they are."

"Shall I, now?" he said, looking up with an inquiring face; "well, as I said afore, I don't wish 'em no harm, to begin with."

"That's bully for you, seeing as you ain't called on to wish much good to anybody, not having had much of a time yourself, eh?"

"True for you, sir," said the porter.

"You are a poor man, I guess?"

"And you wouldn't guess far wrong," was the reply.

"A sick wife, and two girls?"

"Yes, sir,"

"Wife in bed up-stairs?"

"Yes; be you come to take the census?"

"No; I'm come to do you a better turn than that. Your two girls, where are they?"

"At Margate, in sarvice."

"Well, you are not in the way to make a fortune?"

"I'm in the way to come to the workhouse and be buried by the parish; that's what I am in the way of."

"As bad as that, eh?"

"Yes, sir; I ain't adone a stroke of nothin' for fourteen weeks, and if it wer'n't for Vicar Oliphant, we'd be a starvin' at this minute."

"Then I guess you'll do me the service I want, because if you do you needn't work any more."

"If it be honest sarvice I will do it."

"Do you go to church?"

"Sometimes."

"If you took an oath about anything, you'd keep it?"

"If I took one," he said, doggedly.

"*Well, now* listen; in this hand I hold a Testament; in this *bag are one* hundred sovereigns; just listen. You swear as an

honest man and a Christian, as you hoped to be saved, never to divulge what I am going to say to you; and if you do, you call down upon your own head, on your wife and children, eternal damnation. Do you catch it?"

"Yes."

"Now, you may refuse to do what I ask, but if you do, you swear never to tell what I asked—is that plain?"

"Yes."

"Will you take that oath?"

"I don't see no reason agen it."

"Very well, here's the money."

As Wilkess opened the bag and showed the gold, the porter's old eyes fairly blazed.

"You never see such a pile as that before?"

"Never, never!" he exclaimed, clutching it with his bony fingers.

"Swear that oath before you freeze on to the money."

"I'll swear anything," said the porter.

Wilkess put the oath, the old man repeated the words, and kissed the book.

"Now listen. A duel is to be fought to-night in Sandwich—you know what a duel is?"

"My father was a soldier, and that's his sword a-hanging over the mantel, and he fought in the wars," the porter replied, "and he died in the work'us with two medals, six clasps, and blind along of the Indian deserts."

"Then I guess you know something about dueling, eh?"

"Not as I ever seen one, but I was in the militia as a young man."

"Well, that's a sort of knowledge that runs in the direction of dueling. But listen. Two gentlemen are going to fight to the death to-night. They want two witnesses to see fair play. I am one witness. Both the gentlemen know you, and I will give you nine hundred more sovereigns if you will be the other."

The old man, who had been sitting by the fire, seemed to be struck speechless. Wilkess lighted a cigar at a candle that was burning on the round oak table.

"It's too much!" was the porter's reply when he could get it out, "too much!"

"*That's all right*; I am told one thousand pounds can be in-

vested to give you or your old woman, whichever lives longest, enough money every week to keep you till the end of your days; and if it is not enough, I'll make it enough. How's that?"

"Too much, too much," said the old man.

"But you will come and see the fight, and sign the paper as a witness, and never mention it to a soul until I say you may?"

"I'll be the witness, and do all as you tells me."

"Very well, shake on it."

The porter laid his hard hand in the great palm of Wilkess.

"Now listen to this."

"I'm listening," said the old man, buttoning his coat across his chest, and sitting up straight, as if getting ready for action.

"Do you remember Mr. Newbolde, the painter, who lived in the old Manse?"

"Ah, God rest his soul, that I do! He guv' me many a shilling for carrying his bag, and many a shilling when I done nothing for it."

"A real good fellow," said Wilkess, anxious to excite the sympathy he felt sure the man would feel for George.

"Was he? None better, nor so good, now-a-days, except Vicar Oliphant, perhaps."

"You saw him taken out of the river?"

"I did, more's the pity."

"A sad affair?"

"Awful," replied the porter; "and if there was any law in England, somebody'd a swung for it."

"No doubt. Did you know a gentleman named Chingford Lucas?"

"Did I know him!" exclaimed the porter, clenching his fist. "I should think I did!"

"You didn't love him?" suggested Wilkess, upon whom the irritable movement of the hand, and the frown on the old man's face, were not lost.

"I hated him," said the porter; "he nigh choked me once when I let his portmanteau go on to Margate by mistake, a seizing me by the collar, and cursing me to all eternity; and when I was off duty, and met him, I says, 'If you'll come into the meadow along of me, *and fight it out*, I'm your man; and if not, I'll summons you afore *the magistrates*'; and he wouldn't come out, and I summonsed

him, and he was fined five pounds; but I'd a guv him the money to have had it out of his blamed carcase."

"He was a scoundrel," said Wilkess.

"Ay, he was more'n that," said the porter, lowering his voice to a whisper, "he was a murderer!"

"That's so; but the evidence was shaky. Now listen again; sit down."

"Yes, sir," said the old man.

"Do you remember Newbolde's son?"

"George?" replied the old man; "yes, as fine a chap as ever stepped. I remember the poor lad comin' to meet his father at the train the day as that there Lucas took away his mother, and I see him often when he was with old Jukes, the fisherman, and then with the vicar; a rare fine lad."

"And do you remember him at the inquest on the body?"

"At the inn?" he said, rising to his feet again. "Lord bless you, yes. I can see him now, as you may say, the little chap, as white as a sheet, a sayin', 'He's killed my father, and I'll kill him.'"

"Shake!" said Wilkess, putting out his hand once more.

This ceremony duly performed, Wilkess laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, and said, "It is George Newbolde who has challenged Chingford Lucas to fight it out; and it is to witness this duel that I want you for a witness."

"By——," exclaimed the old man, "you needn't a paid me for that. I'd be witness to that if I swinged for it on the gallows—there!"

"Put that money in your pocket, get your hat, and come on."

"I'll see if the missus is asleep," he said, "and I'll put the money in the chest, I might lose it, and then I'm your man."

He crept up the stairs, returned with an old porter's cap on his head, and a thick stick in his hand.

"She's fast asleep," he said, snuffing out the candle with his thumb and finger, "and we'll go out at the back door, so as nobody'll see us, not as it's likely anybody's about."

"We are going to the old Manse," said Wilkess; "and, so as not to attract attention, we won't speak another word till we are there; you take hold of my arm, and lead me the nearest and darkest way to the door through the garden."

It was as dark as midnight. In the old days of superstition the phenomenon would have been regarded as a Divine interposition.

"No sun, no moon, no stars, no otherside the way, November," described the state of the atmosphere to the letter.

"Never see it so awful dark," whispered the porter, "never."

Not a soul appeared to be stirring. As the American and his guide paused now and then, they could hear the wash of the river, as the tide came sluggishly up from the sea.

"George would be able to find his way about?" whispered Wilkess.

"Yes; never you fear for him; but you said we was not to speak—oh, hang them bells!"

The ringers, who had been resting on their ropes, making the silence all the more silent, had suddenly returned to their labors, and the porter was startled.

"Hush," said Wilkess, "don't go a cussing the bells; they are ringing for one you must have liked—the little girl as was George's sister."

"Lord, Lord!" said the old man, standing still; "I ain't a-dreaming, am I? Pinch me."

"You're all right, but whisper, whisper, come close, I can hear."

"What, with them bells a-ringing?"

"With all creation a-ringing," said the American; "you know the day of the month?"

"No, I don't."

"First of November."

"Why, it's the day we found Mister Newbolde in the river!"

"Yes, that's so."

He stopped again.

"They tolled the passing bell that day," he said.

"Yes, and to-day they are ringing a peal, eh, old man? Every dog has his day."

. . . . . .

An hour later, the bells paused once more in their joyous combat with the fog, as if they listened for the splash that a dead body made as it was dropped into the river.

Then they rung out again; and when by-and-by the fog lifted to let the moon glass herself in the sea, George Newbolde and his ally were discussing the route to the North Sea, on the deck of as tight and well-found a yacht as ever was launched from a Yankee *dockyard.*

CHAPTER XV.

"TO ALL SUCH THE DAY WILL COME."

IF you want to live long, travel. I don't mean that you thereby lengthen your days. But life seems longer when you measure it by sights and sensations, not by days and weeks.

It was only two months after the startling events of the previous chapter, that I read an account of the tragic affair at Sandwich in a French newspaper, while traveling with my wife and mother in Italy. Yet it seemed like an old, old story. We had done so much, and seen so much, and had been getting so far away from England, that Sandwich in my imagination, appeared to be as far away in miles as in years.

I felt as if Sandwich was a dream of the past, with fitful sunshine and strange shadows in it. But we had only left it two months previously, when I read in a French journal a paragraph which had been translated from a London paper, dealing with the closing scenes of that pathetic drama of the old house by the tidal river.

The story had been translated from an English paper, and embellished during the process of repetition. I re-translate and adopt it, keeping as closely as possible to the English narrative, the style falling, as it seems to me, more naturally into the character of the incident when read in the light of the narrative with which the reader is already acquainted, than if reproduced with all the elaboration of the French journalist—

"A grand act of vengeance has been achieved in England, at a small coast town called Sandwich.

"The affair is worthy of a more excitable race than that of the phlegmatic community whose history it adorns. But the hero of it had an American experience of the rough vengeance of the plains and the Rocky Mountains to inspire his imagination and nerve his arm.

"Fifteen years ago, a painter, who took the world and his art easily, fell into the snares of one Chingford Lucas, otherwise Fitzherbert Willoughby. This man was a *roué* and an adventurer, and he ingratiated himself into the painter's household. She was fair, *and knew it—the* painter's wife; fair and vain, with longings for

conquests that had not been satisfied with the love of the simple painter. Moreover, the husband, like many of his countrymen, was addicted to the bottle. Bacchus was to him a more potent god than all the other deities, and the man Lucas encouraged him in the vicious worship in order that he might make himself, by contrast, more acceptable to the pretty, fair, vain, and discontented wife. In the end, the adventurer carried off the wife, and, worse still, encompassed the death of the unhappy husband.

"The painter, robbed of his wife, was found dead in the river that runs by the Manse, or the old house, as the townsfolk call it, and all the circumstances attending his death pointed to foul play; but English criminal procedure is peculiar, it leans to the accused; and the verdict of the coroner's inquisition was what is called an open one, the formluæ being *Found Drowned.*

"And so the affair ended, and Lucas and the painter's widow disappeared from the tragic scene.

"But fifteen years having elapsed, Mr. Lucas, now calling himself Fitzherbert Willoughby, has the temerity to return to Sandwich. He no doubt felt that he was safe behind the disguise of years, gray hairs, and an increased amount of adipose tissue. Not that he had cause to fear any process of law against him. 'Found drowned' had satisfied the authorities. Even the police did not attempt to carry the affair further. The old house stood empty, however, as a monument, a picturesque memorial, and a warning.

"The return of Lucas was an ordination of Fate. He came back to Sandwich as the father of a young artiste, and, at the same time, in the capacity of her theatrical agent. She was the youngest child of the dead painter.

"Thither journeyed at the same time her lover, who suit her father had rejected. A sudden and mysterious influence was imposed, however, on this putative father; for in a short time she and her lover were married, and her true name was registered, not as Willoughby, but as Newbolde. The inference is that Lucas, or Willoughby, hoping to do tardy justice to the poor child, confessed to her identity, for her lover, on the day of their marriage, presented the adventurer with a thousand pounds. The happy young couple are now on the continent, but they will doubtless be interrogated, and we may learn more of this romantic affair.

"*Two days after* the marriage ceremony, a railway official, living *near, found fastened* upon the bridge a notification, written in a

bold hand, '*Search the river for the murderer of Newbolde, the painter—you will find the thief and assassin—to all such the day will come.*'

"The river was dragged, the body found. The trousers were made American fashion, and in one of the pistol-pockets was found a revolver, with the initials F. W. upon the stock. Four of the chambers were loaded. In the other was a letter, which was deciphered with great difficulty. Fortunately it was read before the superscription, which was the address of a Catholic priest in London.

"It ran as follows: '*Pray for the soul of Chingford Lucas, who confesses himself guilty of the deadliest sins known to the Church, and acknowledges that he is now righteously punished for the murder of his friend, who was found drowned by the bridge at Sandwich fifteen years ago. Pray for the soul of Chingford Lucas, and find in his cabinet at Buckingham Street, and in his writing-desk at Sandwich, money for the blessed charities of the Virgin.*'

"Writings in the hand of Chingford Lucas, and found at his rooms, were proper sequels to his confession. A bullet-wound was found to have penetrated the heart. The deceased's uncle, and only living relative, we believe, came forward and claimed the body.

"An inquest was held, and, notwithstanding the evidence, the jury, with a fine sentiment as to the fitness of things, brought in a verdict of *Found Drowned*, as in the case of the deceased's victim fifteen years previously.

"Reports speak of mysterious strangers having been seen in Sandwich during the week, but as it is a town of great antiquity, one of the ancient Cinque ports, this is not surprising. Tourists from Margate, Deal, and other parts of the coast, frequently visit Sandwich.

"Vicar Oliphant, an old and respected resident, says an American gentleman, who gave no name or address, called upon him, and reported the death of the dead painter's only son, while on a voyage to New Zealand, and in token thereof brought him a memorial of the past from the young man's dying hands. Riverside people speak of a steam launch, in which it is believed the avenger of Newbolde escaped (for it is not doubted that Lucas was killed, probably in a duel to the death); but while trace of such a vessel is found at Margate coasting toward Sandwich, it has disappeared; a

such a tiny boat could not put to sea, it may turn up at some adjacent port.

"The police believe George Newbolde, the painter's son, is not dead, but that he has fulfilled the vow he made at the inquest on his father.

"It is known that he was in the town six years ago; and it is known that he had for years been hunting down Lucas, and searching for his sister, Too poor to obtain help to circumvent the aliases of Lucas, whom the police knew as a foreign spy and sharp financier, he at last 'struck ile,' bought the services of a clever Yankee confederate, and swept to his revenge—late in the day, but characteristic of a noble and dutiful son. And yet we Frenchmen say the English life has no romance!"

I kept this paper from the eyes of Maggie and my mother. Later I answered some inquiries that were made through the English consul at Milan. I gave him an outline of my proposed tour. He reported to the local police. I wrote to the vicar, urging him to use his influence to have the affair hushed up. I learned later that he went to London, saw the chiefs at Scotland Yard, and also the Secretary of the Home Office. They finally came to the conclusion that the matter should rest where the verdict of the coroner's inquest had left it.

And so at present we sail on over sunny seas, from port to port, we three, mother, wife, and husband, a happy family, seeing the world for the first time on its brightest side. I live in hope that one day, soon, I may obtain absolution from my oath, and tell them the true story of Drummond's Gulch, and disclose to them, as I have in these records, the key to the mystery of Margaret Willoughby, the story of the old house at Sandwich.

Within the past few weeks events have marched on in this direction. At Venice we met an interesting widow. She was daintily robed in China crape, and wore a great diamond clasp on her shoulder. Tall, stately, with a calm face, streaks of gray in her hair —Lady Ann, the landlady of the "Castle" at Drummond's Gulch.

I saw her stepping from a gondola, and came between her and the palace where she was lodging.

"Yes, it's me," she said; "you can bet your bottom dollar on it; and a poor, lonely, miserable concern I am; glad to see you, *Mister Maynard,* and what's become of that maniac Drummond?"

"*I really don't* know," I said.

"You have heard all about my poor little Tommy?" she said.

"No," I said; "but you are in mourning?"

"Yes; I'm a widow, and never was more wretched. I'm traveling for my health, couldn't stand the Gulch any longer; the Injuns did for him, poor little chap—the kindest feller any woman was ever blessed with meeting. You left before the news came in after the rescue party went out. Well, they got him, and I tried to have him embalmed, but, Lord bless you, it wer'n't possible; though, if the family wish it, he can be removed to his own land."

Then she began to cry. I escorted her into her rooms. We mounted a palatial marble staircase, and were ushered into a grand, solemn apartment.

"Ain't it awful to be alone? And in a place like this. A palace they calls it. I come round this way to England, traveling through Europe, because my Frisco friends said it would distract my mind. Well, I guess it has a piece, though if my Tommy was alive, I'd sooner be running that bar at the Gulch than live in a palace."

"It was a terrible place for a lady," I said.

"Yes, for a lady, but not for me," she said. "There, don't apologize; I see you want to. You didn't mean an unkindness to me. I was not a lady, and therefore it weren't a terrible place for me."

"But you did not like it?"

"I liked any place where my little man was—could have been happy in a swamp with him; and, some of those fellers you see in the mining camp were not such a bad lot, after all. Nary a one of them ever offered me an insult, and I can not say as much for the fine European gentlemen I have met since I began to travel to distract my mind. Ah, Mister Maynard, life's just what you make it, though its happiness depends for a woman on the man she meets, and for the man on the woman he takes up with."

"I notice a good sign in your condition of mind, Lady Ann," I said; "you are inclined to be philosophic, and that is on the way to resignation, if not contentment."

"Well, I hope so," she replied; "what can't be cured has got to be endured, though I will never cease to regret my dear feller, and shall always cherish his memory; a kinder feller, a better, a more honest and generous, never lived to bless a woman, nor ever died to make her wretched."

She wiped her eyes after this eloquent outburst, and said, "But

there, we've said enough about me; and how have you fared? Well, I know, as to money. Dick was a good sort at bottom, and fond of you."

"Yes, that is true, and I have fared well. Since I said good-by to you I have married."

"Is that so? For money? Or for what is better than all the gold in Frisco?"

"For love," I said.

"Then I congratulate you," she said, taking my hand, and shaking it cordially.

"Here in Venice I shall take the first opportunity of introducing her. You must let me know your movements."

"I will, you bet," she answered; "and she shall give me some hints about European manners and all that kind of thing, eh? Would you mind? I mean to polish up, you know, for the sake of his memory, and just to show that Sir Thomas, if he married beneath him, did not do so very badly, after all."

She rose as she said this, as if to parade the fine woman who had condescended to make Sir Thomas happy, and she did so with an air that promised an apt pupil in the art of seeming, which is a great art in society.

"Poor Sir Thomas was a happy man in meeting so beautiful and so good a woman," I said.

"No flattery, Maynard. I was good to look at, that is all; but I was true and faithful to him, and I will live to honor his memory, and prove my devotion in that way to the last. There! Enough of that, and enough of me, as I said before. It's very nice to talk to you, and it's the happiest moment I've had since my sorrow."

"Is any one traveling with you?" I asked, by way of completely changing the subject.

"Oh, yes," she said; "who would you guess I've brought along?"

"I can not guess."

"No; I would bet anything you didn't. I'd never have pulled through at all without him. Did you ever have what they calls a currier on your travels?"

"Yes, I have one now; a very useful fellow he is."

"Well, of course, I've gotten one. My Frisco friends said I *couldn't travel* without a currier even as an ordinary lady, but as a *lady of title I mustn't* think of it; so they handed me over to that

greasy Italian you see a-riding with me in that boat. But Washy bosses the whole crowd."

"Washy! Is he with you?"

"You bet he is. I wouldn't come without him; he's got a power of sense, that old nig has; guess I'd have been poisoned with their breakfasts and dinners if it hadn't been for Washy."

She rose, and called Washy, who presently appeared in a shining black and gold livery, with a white clerical necktie, and a pair of white cotton gloves.

"Why, this is a pleasure; how do you do, Mr. Washington?"

"Bery good, tank you, might say fust-rate, Massa Maynard."

"Looks well, don't he? My Frisco friends would have him dressed up in uniform. If I'd been just anybody's widow, they said, it would not matter; but Lady Thomas Montgomery, traveling to enter into possession of Sir Thomas's estates, would be out of it without a man in livery; and as Washy didn't mind, we started on those terms, and a real good help he has been to me, and a comfort, with his proverbs and his consoling texts, and knowing how to cook and to go to market."

Washy smiled, and looked at himself in a mirror, and appeared to be perfectly contented and happy.

"My lady and me hab left a pusson in charge of de hut, and when de Boss Drummond comes home, dey will let me know by de cable, and if he say, 'Come back, Washy,' I go; and if he say, 'Don't come back, Washy, stay wid de Lady Ann,' why den I stay wid her ladyship; ain't it, Lady Ann?"

"Quite correct, Washy; and now you can go and order me some tea, and send in some wine and some cigarettes for Mr. Maynard. Will you come and dine, and bring Mrs. Maynard? Of course, I'll have to call upon her first, and I'll do that right away, and leave cards if she is out, and write her a letter apologizing for the short notice, and all that. Oh, I'm getting on, I'll be quite a society lady before the year's out; and don't you forget it."

"I won't," I said, smiling at the familiar phrase and the curious, confident, and unsophisticated style of my friend, feeling at the same time something like regret that she should have resolved to alter all this "out of respect for Sir Thomas's memory," and to propitiate the good opinion of the family.

"I am sorry we can not dine with you, Lady Ann, we are leaving Venice *this evening*; but we shall meet you, I hope, very soon."

"That's too bad," she said; "but when one is traveling around, it is difficult to arrange dinner parties. And I guess I have some packing to do to-night. Not that I do much in that way. Washy's as good as a lady's maid at that work."

"You, too, are leaving Venice then?"

"Yes."

"And where are you going?"

"Guess we are making our way to Paris, and then to London, and then we go right straight to Canterbury."

"To Canterbury?"

"Yes, to see my husband's lawyers, and claim the estates, and establish my rights, as Tommy wished with his dying hand all regular and witnessed, and his will which he made three years ago in Frisco, all straight and legal, though I wouldn't care for a cent of it, whatever it may pay out, if I could have Tommy back again."

She clapped her hands, and called Washy.

"Don't mind the tea," she said; "bring a bottle of wine."

"Yes, mam, said Washy, returning almost immediately with a bottle of champagne.

"You musn't refuse," she said, for Auld Lang Syne, as you and the Boss used to say. And you will introduce me to your wife?"

"Indeed I will, and she will be delighted, as I shall."

"Very well, then, we will drink happiness and good fortune to her," she said, raising a full glass to her lips.

"Forgive me," I said, interrupting her, "let us use the good old formula of the Gulch."

She looked inquiringly over her glass, and I said, "Here we go"; at which she laughed, and repeated the finish of all toasts and the beginning of all drinks at the Gulch, After paying similar honors to Dick Drummond, and my wishing her all the good things I could think of, in a little toast which I drink all by myself, we parted, she to resume her study of society manners, with a view to prepare for the higher sphere of life to which it had pleased Providence to call her, I to join my wife and mother, and tell them of my interesting encounter.

What possibilities all this suggests! Lady Ann has a good heart, a fine appearance, who knows that she may not in the future hold her own in the ancient domain of the Kent Montgomeries? I *think she will; if I* can be of any service to her in that direction I *shall render it* cheerfully.

Meanwhile, as I said before, we three—Maggie and I and a dear, white-haired, lovable old lady—are basking in the genial light of sunny seas, Love at the prow, Fortune at the helm.

"I have ceased to look back," said Maggie the other day, as we sat by Lake Miggiore, talking of our strange fortunes; "the mystery of the past has no longer any fascination for me. I live in the present, and shall be content with any future through which we may walk hand in hand together."

THE END.